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WHITTLINGS

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WHITTLINGS

NANTUCKET DAYS

WHITTLINGS

BY

O. J. LAYLANDER

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ABOUT WHITTLING

In Nathaniel Parker Willis's delectable Philosophy of Whittling he remarks that Americans must and will whittle. I am convinced that this primitive Nantucket diversion is a quite common propensity. It is a necessary part of the program of a busy man. The man who does not or cannot whittle will rust or rot in the deep ruts of his vocation.

Whittlings take various forms. Whether it be golf, bridge, antiques, carvings, coins, or what not, it matters little. My own are words. Most whittlings of this type are chiefly valuable for starting or reviving fires. Sometimes even this use is futile.

The whittlings here projected upon defenseless friends are for the most part stories based upon personal experiences. While I have not been unmindful of the warning of Sir Walter Raleigh, "Whosoever in writing a Moderne Historie shall follow truth too neare the heeles, it may haply strike out his teeth," yet all these stories do contain more than a modicum of fact,

and some are dangerously near true. It is not contended that this adds anything to their merit; it is simply an explanation of how they came to be written at all.

In any event, to paraphrase old Walt, whittling is to the whittler and comes back most to him. It has been a pleasure to do it.

O. J. L.

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I.
SHORT STORIES

THE ESCAPE

Jacob Hauge was a hard man. "Pig-headed Jake" his neighbors called him. This was more than a figure of speech. If Jake's prize Poland China boar could have stood erect; if the boar's jaws could have been covered with a bushy black beard; if his head had been topped with a broad-brimmed black hat worn through at the creases; if he could have been clothed with the prescribed "barn-door" trousers, the broad flap in front fastened at the side with hooks and eyes, he and Jake might have passed as twins.

Hauge's small piggy eyes were narrowly, deeply set in a small head that sloped and widened into a big gristly neck and huge shoulders. At the end of his clubby arms were fat stumpy paws that served as hands. He was five feet six in height. His chest measure was forty-eight; belly, fifty-two. He weighed two hundred and forty-six. He was deeply religious and observed faithfully the tenets of his sect. Had the church organization included "ruling elders" he would have been not only *one* but *the* one. Jacob Hauge

was orthodox. He saw to it that there was not the slightest deviation from the customs that marked these people as the chosen of God. Personal and household adornment was a sin. The buttonless black garbs, the bare floors and benches in the living room marked the plainness of life that was an essential part of their dreary religion. Hauge was not only a power in the church but, as the richest man in the township, made himself felt in local civic affairs. Few tried to oppose him. It was easier to yield and be comfortable. So he waxed fat and was feared and hated by all.

The Hauge farm of four hundred acres marked the southern limit of settlement by this sect that spread over a half dozen townships of the choicest of Ohio land. The north eighty was separated from the main farm by a road that led to the village two miles beyond. The intervening portion and far to the south was occupied by a mixed people that had come from Pennsylvania in the early days. Most of them were of Irish or Dutch descent. It was the widow Riley and her two sons, Dennis and Neil, that owned the farm immediately south of Hauge's. And a half mile farther down the road to the village lived Herman Most, with his mother and sister Martha.

Rumor had it that Martha as a young girl had an unfortunate experience with a scamp over in Wayne county, whence they came some ten years before; but the neighbors disbelieved, or forgot – all except Jake Hauge – and the Mosts were deservedly popular. They were intelligent and well mannered. The genial Herman had beaten Jake Hauge's candidate for township assessor. For years Jake had controlled the assessor and, incidentally, his own taxation. This time there was an honest assessment. Jake tried to bribe Herman into reducing the assessment. Failing in this, he called both Herman and his sister vile names and vowed vengeance. The assessment was not changed. This was the beginning of hostilities.

It was in his household that Jake Hauge's obstinacy and cruelty and conceit were most in evidence. For thirty years his frail, pale wife, Rebecca, had been jerked and tossed and bullied by this animal until she was tired unto death. Jane, the sixteen year old, was of her mother's type. She lived in constant terror of crossing her father. She would never forget the time that Reuben, her older brother, had remonstrated with his father for kicking a sick horse that was too ill to rise. Jake struck Reuben a terrific blow in the face, breaking the boy's nose and cutting open his

cheek. The blood frightened Jane. Inwardly she was glad when Reuben ran away and joined the army, but before her father she tried to look sorry. Some said the boy was killed at Gettysburg, but if Herman Most's eyesight was good, he had seen recently in Cleveland a successful, broken-nosed business man, whose name was *not* "Reuben Hauge." Herman guarded his secret. He did not intend to give old Jake a chance to disfigure Reuben a second time. Nevertheless, he told Margaret the secret and she told the mother.

You must know Margaret. She was the older daughter. She had just turned twenty. She was not Jake Hauge's daughter although he was her father. It was a freak of breeding that some distant forebear reappeared in this fine specimen of young womanhood. The Madonna-like face, its lovely light hidden by the miserable black bonnet, the beautiful crown of auburn hair, the fertile brain beneath, the inviting curves of her well balanced body – all of her was as far removed from the Hauges as East from West. She pitied her mother and utterly detested the creature she had to call father. She thought too fast and too far ahead for Jake Hauge to follow. She had a quiet courage and reserve strength anomalous to her environment. She avoided any break with

her father, ostensibly obeyed his commands, observed the church regulations, and covertly loved Herman Most. Nor was it a one-sided affair. She did not know yet when or where release awaited, but she would never sacrifice her life on the Hauge altar. She might not find heaven – but she would escape hell, and Herman Most would be her pilot. The way to escape – where did it lie?

Old Jake sensed that there was something going on that he could not understand, but he had not detected any overt act on which to proceed. Surely Margaret would never go outside the church for "a man." Yet he recalled that frequently he had seen her talking at the village to the Riley boys and Herman Most, and to young Snyder, the postmaster's son. "Mebbe fader bedder look a leedle oud," he said to himself.

It was at the supper table the day of his unsuccessful adventure with assessor Most that he exploded from pent up rage because he couldn't handle Herman. As he related the incident he poured forth his entire vocabulary of abusive terms and fairly frothed like an excited hog. Turning towards Margaret he said, "Mebbe I god yoost a few words for you, too. Somedimes you look from de eyes oud kind of funny ven I talk aboud dat polecat. Ven you put de lamp in de

vindow for de man to koom to pundle he vond be no oudsider like dis Dutchhoundt. You vill schtay by de church or you schleep alvays by yourself. Don'd forget dat. Vait till I ketch dat feller oud on de road. I fix him so he vond be makin' for me again more taxes already."

It was Saturday night in late June. The two sisters had walked to the village to do some errands. Margaret knew that Herman would be there. The whole country side went to town Saturday nights. She would warn him of her father's threats. She soon found him and told him what to expect. Herman smiled as he said, "Of course I'll not start anything lest he take it out on you, but if he insists on going to school to me I'll see that he learns his lessons well. But it is getting late and time for you girls to be going home. I have the two-seated buggy here. Let Jane drive and we can talk further on the way."

Jane drove slowly. Nor did she look toward the back seat. She stopped the team quietly at the front gate and proceeded up the walk to the house. At the gate Margaret's black bonnet was pushed back for a brief moment as the lovers' lips met in a hasty farewell. Jane, a few yards ahead, left the door open for Margaret, who followed quietly. Scarcely had Margaret entered the

door when the huge horny paw of Jake Hauge almost wrenched her fair shoulder from her body as he seized her, thrust her against the wall and bellowed, "You ain'd so smard as you tink. I was vaitin up for you and vatchin from the vindow already." Then he shook her with all the strength of his ugly arms. "So you like keeses, hey? Vell, go on bed now and I'll kees you some more yet to-morrow." She knew the postponement of the whipping was only to make her suffer the more. No one slept that night but Jake Hauge. He always slept. The Sunday breakfast was eaten in ominous silence. Then he got up, went to the barn, put the light harness on the horses and hitched them to the two-seated buggy. Next he made his wonted tour of the great barnyard to see that doors and gates were properly fastened. He reëntered the barn, and soon emerged carrying a large rawhide riding whip which he limbered as he proceeded to the house. He went into the kitchen where Margaret was washing the dishes. "Come on the voodhouse," he commanded. She obeyed. "Unhook de dress and pull him down. Now bend ofer."

Nothing but a light cotton chemise lay between her soft white skin and the stinging thong. Seven times he struck her, and from the blue-

black welts the blood oozed through the thin garment. "Now you tink you vant some more keesing?" Not a word or cry escaped her lips. "You vond talk some, hey? All righd, I kees you some more." Changing his position he criss-crossed with seven more cruel lashes. "Next time ve make him four times seven." Jake Hauge dealt in sevens. Said it was a scriptural number. Back he went into the house carrying the blood-stained lash.

To his wife: "Rebecca, you don'd go on church. Schtay by de house and vatch for pole-cats. Chane, you go mit your fadder on church." He threw the whip into the barn, climbed into the buggy, and drove to church.

The mother bathed and dressed the cruel wounds. Between her sobs she implored, "Oh, Margaret, vy don'd you gif in? He vill kill you if you don'd gif up dat Herman boy."

"Not on your life," replied Margaret. "This is the last whipping for me. As soon as I can get well I am going to bring Herman right here into this room, and I'll dare that old devil to touch me. If he tries to beat me again I shall feel like matting his dirty black beard with red paint fresh from the top of his pig head. I'll tell you a secret: I borrowed a pistol from Dennis Riley.

Told him I wanted to shoot rats. I've learned how to use the little thing and the next time I am taken to the woodshed there will be a great surprise."

"Oh, Margaret, don'd shoot him. Dat would be murder!"

"I am not so sure about that. They don't murder hogs; they just kill them so humans can live. Probably Richland township would give me a medal. But you needn't be alarmed. I do not intend to kill him; I'll just frighten him within an inch of his life. At heart he is a coward. Most bullies are. True, he might have a stroke when he sees the gun. More likely he would run if he were not so fat. I am going to give him a dose of the medicine you should have given him thirty years ago. I am very sure I am through with whippings, and before I finish with him, he'll know it as well as I."

The Hauge farm was ideal. Near the center of the beautifully rolling tract was a hill crowned with great white oaks, chestnut, and linden trees. At the edge of the woodland clustered the farm buildings: an immense barn, corn cribs, wagon house, hog house, chicken house – all the accessories of a well ordered farm, all a brilliant red. The dwelling house was gray and small. It was

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sinful to be comfortable. But the most famous feature of the farm was the immense spring that gushed from the hillside and poured its thousands of daily barrels into a brook that wound its way through broad meadows to the "Creek of a Thousand Springs" in the valley beyond. This region abounded in springs. One known as "The Bubbling Spring" lay almost exactly in the way of the road that separated the north eighty from the main farm. It was a peculiar formation in that it had no surface outlet. A bowl-shaped basin a few feet in diameter in which the sandy water bubbled violently was filled with dangerous quicksand. A riff-raff road curved slightly at its side. There were white danger posts at the edge of the basin next to the road, and at the farther side was a high post clearly marked, "Danger. Keep Out." It was said that a ten-foot fence rail stuck into this bowl would be sucked out of sight in a half hour.

It was harvest time. Everywhere the hum of the reapers. In the Hauge wheat field of one hundred acres two harvesting machines were strewing the newly made stubble with golden bundles. The machines were hungry and their food was twine. When the harvesters came in for the noon meal they told Hauge there was only enough

twine for a couple hours' work. He said he would at once drive to the village and get a supply. Only one horse was unused in the fields, Trixie, the little gray mare, said to be well named. Jake hastily hitched Trixie to the road cart, hurried to the village, loaded the bundle of twine into the cart, and started back. Always when Trixie headed homeward she was hard to hold. To-day she was really running away when they reached the top of the incline at the foot of which lay The Bubbling Spring. All might have been well if a startled partridge had not whirred over her head at that spot. As it was, she shied, upset the cart, and spilled two hundred and forty-six pounds of Jacob Hauge plump into the quicksand. Meantime Trixie strewed the cart along the roadside. At the top of the hill Herman Most in his farm wagon met the mare galloping homeward. "That means a new cart for old Jake," he mused, "and Lord knows he will hate to part with the price." Down the slope he trotted his team to the culvert, and there a few yards ahead of him stood Jake Hauge thigh deep in the quicksand of The Bubbling Spring. Frantically he called to Herman: "I can't get oud. For God's sake safe me. I'll gif you de gurl, de nord eighty, anyding you vant, so help me Gott!"

"Well," said Herman, "I don't want the eighty, and I shall have the girl, anyway. I certainly don't owe you anything. But I would help even a hog out of a mudhole, so I'll see what I can do. Not much myself. You are too heavy. I'll try to fix you so you can wait until I drive up to Ryans's, get some rope, and bring the boys along back to help." Herman went to the rail fence at the roadside, took from it a light, dry chestnut pole. This he laid across the rim of the bowl. "Now rest your arms over that and I'll be back in a jiffy. Better keep pretty still. These chestnut rails are often brittle."

He galloped the team to the Ryans's. Fortunately, it was the noon hour and the boys were at home. "Quick," said Herman, "get a rope, climb into the wagon and go back with me to The Bubbling Spring. My prospective father-in-law is trying to find out how deep it is, and if we don't get there before ten minutes he'll be in hell, and they haven't got it hot enough yet down there for him."

"Well, say," responded Dennis, "if we ever get a rope around that old cuss's neck let's hang him to the big elm by the culvert and ask Richland township for a bounty."

Herman slowed up the team as they reached

the top of the hill. At the bottom of the slope beside The Bubbling Spring the party halted. On the surface of the spring lay a broken chestnut pole and a broad-brimmed black hat worn through at the creases.

RUPERT'S ROOST

My uncle had a prophetic nose. When he made his first visit to Iowa in 1860 he sensed that these boundless prairies, dented only here and there by the intrepid homeseekers, would soon become the garden of the West. He resolved to sell his Ohio farm, where he had battled with stones and stumps since boyhood, and settle in the land of promise. He was not poor, for he had a fine family and sufficient means to purchase his pick of Iowa lands and install the best of improvements. An innate love of trees, resulting from the environment of youth, manifested itself, for it was not on the prairie but at the prairie's edge he made his choice. This tract of four hundred acres lay about three miles from Tryon, a thriving town on the new Rock Island railroad. Through one portion of this tract coursed a creek over a bed of rocky shelves and white sand to the nearby Wapsipinicon river. At the side of this brook, among the stately elms and walnuts, my uncle built Edgewood Place.

Back to the open south and west the billowy

folds of rolling prairie extended to the meeting sky. Here and there a grove of young maples and a hut marked the advent of a sturdy pioneer. Thousands of acres of virgin prairie afforded limitless supplies of hay and pasture for my uncle's stock.

It was an ideal condition, but it was doomed to be shortlived. In the early seventies the settlers literally swarmed. The immigration bureaus were busy. Thousands of Scandinavians, Bohemians, Belgians, and Irish were being poured into the prairies. A long line of covered wagons extended from New York and Ohio far into the alluring gardens of Iowa. All over Rolling Prairie, as far as the eye could reach, came the yellow dots on the great carpet of green – hastily erected unpainted shacks, and the straw-covered roofs of the stables of the settlers. Came also barbed wire, and mine and thine, and the abandonment of the old roads that wound from ridge to ridge and lost themselves in the distance. Most of these shacks were little one-story huts barely able to shut out the inclement weather. Only an occasional settler had means to build anything that approached a real farm house.

It was into this picture I came in 1875 when I accepted my uncle's invitation to visit Edgewood

Place. Both my cousins met my train at Tryon. Frank, the elder, had graduated from the Agricultural College at Ames and was devoting his energies to scientific farming in company with my uncle. Edward, two years younger, was about to graduate from the law school at Iowa City and was home for the week end. I was introduced to a third man who was with my cousins at the station. He was the school superintendent at Tryon. He was older than my cousin – perhaps thirty-five, single, and impressed me as a cultured gentleman who was probably a little lonely at Tryon.

It was a crisp afternoon in early November that Frank's spanking team hurried us to Edgewood. It was the height of the husking season and I opened my eyes in wonder at the great cribs of yellow corn in every farmyard. As my uncle's place came into sight I experienced a real surprise. I knew he was prosperous but I had not expected to see a place so remarkably attractive. "I understand this is your first visit," observed the schoolmaster. "I am at Edgewood a great deal. I find it a real oasis." I looked forward to an enjoyable visit. I did not know that the approaching night was to be one I could never forget.

It was not the dinner, although I admit that the immense plates of prairie chicken accompanied by sweet potatoes, gravy, pumpkin pie, and fresh cider were not conducive to forgetfulness. After the cigars it was Frank who addressed the schoolmaster: "Ought we not to acquaint my cousin with the forum? There are grave questions to settle. That Wolf Creek affair, for instance, has taken a new turn. Perhaps a little outside light may be helpful."

"That's the ticket," broke in Edward. "By all means let's take Cousin Judson to Rupert's Roost. Maybe Rupey will open up a little when he realizes that he has one really intelligent auditor." Then the schoolmaster explained to me. "Two or three years ago, when the big rush was made to Rolling Prairie, one of the choicest pieces of land was settled upon by a young fellow from Virginia. His name was Rupert Keys. The shack which he built is grotesque. It is so small at the base, so high and steep-roofed, that it stands out on the prairie as a yellow tower. The neighbors call it 'Rupert's Roost.' Keys keeps bachelor's hall; has no associates except your uncle's famly, and is regarded, to say the least, as very peculiar. I find him one of the most interesting persons I ever met. He is well educated. He takes

the best magazines, and has a library of choice books – some of them quite rare. He has a certain charm of manner – a sort of magnetism that submerges his eccentricities, some of which are quite pronounced. Although only about thirty years old, he seems completely soured on women. He refuses to go any place where he is likely to meet them. The members of your uncle's family are the only exceptions. Rupert says he can find in the books all the women he needs to know. Another pet aversion is his fear of sleeping on the ground floor. That is why the Roost has the second story. No one but Rupert has ever climbed the ladder and opened the trap door that closes the loft. I sometimes think he just assumes these attitudes to keep ignoramuses at a safe distance. The men generally like him. While he is rather slight for heavy work, yet he is a good hand, willing, industrious, and dependable. I confess I am quite fond of him. I am glad you are to meet him. I think you will like him. At any rate, he's different. That is worth something in itself."

Once more the dappled grays and the two-seated wagon. As we swung onto the prairie the light in the Roost on the crest of the ridge some three miles away was pointed out. The prairie glistened in the light of the full moon. The dis-

tant shacks were silhouetted against the blue black sky and from them yellow eyes gleamed at us in the still distance. Rupert's sole companion, a large wolf dog, noisily announced our approach. The young man gave us warm welcome. Noting the stranger in the group he apologized for husking attire. It was late before he had cribbed his second fifty bushel load of corn. The supper dishes were still unwashed. During the commonplace conversation that followed relating to newcomers, the crops, the weather, the prospective markets, and so forth, I tried to analyze my impressions of this singular young man. He was much smaller than my husky cousins, but well proportioned and graceful in his carriage. The schoolmaster's description was inadequate. He had not mentioned the penetrating blue eyes, the somewhat caressing drawl, and the luminous face. In short, he was one of those magnetic personages that inexplainably attract one instantly. Intelligence was stamped in every feature. It promised to be an interesting evening.

"Better fire up a little, Rupe," said Edward. "We can't rely wholly upon the heat of discussions, you know." Rupert filled the stove with light wood, adding a few ears of corn for good measure. He refilled his pipe and drew away from

the stove. Following a lull he turned to Edward and said, "Any time you fellows want to commence, shoot! Don't wait for me." He arose and closed the draft of the stove, for the rusty pipe had become red hot and the flame showed dangerously through the holes near the loft floor. "I expect I'll burn this old roost down yet with that treacherous pipe. Wouldn't make much difference, for next year I intend to build a real house."

"Are the wedding bells to ring at last?" queried Frank. "No," said Rupert, "I wouldn't marry the best woman in the world, but I'll promise you this: I'll include a ten by twelve assembly hall in my plans and dedicate it to the gang."

"And now," said Frank, "let's get down to business. The question before the wise men tonight is, 'Should he or should he have not?' You see, Rupert, I have a bit of news for you. I learned in town to-day that the trial is over and Ned Westcott gets three years board and room at the Fort Madison penitentiary." Then Frank explained to me that in the neighboring settlement of Wolf Creek there lived a respectable family by the name of Means. Jacob Means discovered that his twenty year old daughter was in dire trouble. She placed the blame on Ned Westcott, also of a respectable family and well-to-do. The

father met the young man by appointment in the village. Meanwhile he secured a warrant for Ned's arrest. He gave Westcott his choice: either to accompany him, procure a marriage license and marry the girl at once, or suffer the consequences. Ned refused to marry the girl, stating boldly that there were two other fellows equally culpable, and that he was chosen because he was not without means. He offered to compromise by providing liberally for the care of the child, because he knew the others could not and would not. Farmer Means assured him it was protection of Madge's name, not money, that he wanted and that he would have. Hence arrest, trial, conviction, sentence, and it was now up to the Rolling Prairie forum to settle the question on which the Wolf Creek public were hopelessly divided, to-wit: Was Ned justifiable in refusing to marry the girl?

"I might add that in my own opinion it is not a debatable question," said Frank. "He should have married her as the easiest way out of a bad mess, and if later it transpired they were incompatible, dissolve the marriage."

"Wait a minute," spoke Edward. "As a prospective lawyer I want to say I should much prefer to defend than to prosecute in such a case.

There seems little doubt that Ned did not have more than a third interest in the matter. There is no justice in forcing on each a burden for life. I think he showed nerve in preferring a definite term in one prison to a life term in the other. Marriage meant perpetual hell for both of them. At any rate, why should the man always be chargeable with the whole blame? The evidence showed plainly that this was not a one-sided affair and I do not believe any good will have been accomplished by Ned Westcott's three years' service at Fort Madison. The law has been satisfied, but the essentials have been ignored."

"Well," said the schoolmaster, "it is in prison that most married folks find themselves anyway, and I do not know that the choice of route makes so very much difference. If a man gets into a predicament where he can't escape marriage he would better take his medicine and keep still about it. I think we make too much of a fetish of marriage. Any one of you can count on his fingers all the perfectly happy married couples of his acquaintance. I know less than a dozen, and I am not dead sure of some of them. I mean marriages in which there is a perfect mating – no bickerings, no jealousies, no manifestations of the spirit of ownership, unqualified satisfaction with

each other. What is love, anyway? My observation has led me far from the old belief that there is a match factory in heaven."

"Well," said Edward, "if there was no basis of marriage but love there would be mighty few weddings. Most marriages are matters of custom, of convenience, or of business. The parties to the contract, if they think at all, know it is all guess work."

"Of course," continued the schoolmaster, "often one or the other has unusual power of adaptation and they wiggle along conventionally. I know one old fellow that says he has known forty women, any one of whom he could have lived with happily; and I am not sure that he might not have done so. But he is a genius in adaptation, and of a temperament that would never assert ownership, nor probably even recognize it in his partner. The trouble is, as it seems to me, that men and women do not try to understand each other essentially and elementally. They stumble into marriage and blunder follows blunder until at last one or the other just tires out and quits. Sometimes it is divorce, sometimes just dry rot."

"That's right," said Edward. "We make too great a hullabaloo about marriage. Reduced to its lowest terms and shorn of its priestly-made gar-

ments, it is a necessary civil contract, and that's about all. I sometimes think the birds know as much about real marriage as humans do."

"Wait a minute," interjected Frank, "don't carry that analogy too far. Some species of birds mate for life; some for the season only; and most of them are strictly polygamous."

"All the same," responded the schoolmaster, "when birds do mate they do not have to call in any preacher to make it stick, and they do seem to be following some deep-seated law. What I contend is that marriage is primarily a sex relation, and that is the one phase of the question which is carefully tabooed until usually it is too late. How about it, Rupe?"

"I've been expecting this turn," said Rupert. "The schoolmaster is right. The Means-Westcott affair is merely an unfortunate incident in the general scheme. The question of the foundations of marriage is the important one. It was unavoidable that this discussion should drift into questions tied up in femininism. I am convinced that nine-tenths of marriage failures lie in fundamental sex differences. Marriage troubles are chiefly surface indications. The roots of incompatibility go extremely deep. It is a pity that our marriages are so wofully artificial. They will never

be different until men and women know more about each other fundamentally. My old friend, Dr. Middleton, of Richmond, with whom I was intimate, and whose technical library was always at my disposal, was a specialist in femininism. I remember his saying to me, 'Married men are easily classified and they know it. There are only two classes: Class A, polygamists; Class B, impotents. True, a large share of Class A do not practice polygamy, being restrained by fear, or conventions, or the church; but, according to the Sermon on the Mount, they are, or they have been, or at some time they will be polygamous at heart.'

"On the other hand, no card catalog could include the myriad types of femininity. They run the whole gamut from the occasional person possessed with a consuming desire to the many as passionless as marble statues. That is why women are unsafe on juries passing judgment on an erring one of their own sex. Woman cannot generalize on questions involving sex. She measures all women by herself."

"Do I infer," asked Frank, "that you favor the double standard?"

"Those who decry the double standard," replied Rupert, "often overlook that it is largely a

woman-made standard after all. It has its source in secrecy, ignorance, and prejudice. If women would only tell the truth about themselves and men only had sense enough to try to learn it, many unhappy marriages would be avoided. Make no mistake, physical adaptability is the first essential to a happy union. From it naturally develop those higher desires and mutual tastes and interests that mark the perfect union. Without it, the weeds of discord will overrun the garden of love."

Thus for an hour or two ran the discussion back and forth. But it was growing late, and Rupert was tired. Warm goodnights, and we proceeded homeward. Rupert refilled the stove, climbed the ladder, dropped the door, wrapped himself in a heavy woolen blanket and quickly fell asleep. Slowly we jogged homeward. The schoolmaster broke the silence: "What do you think of Rupert?" "I think he is charming," I replied. "It is too bad he is so isolated."

"Don't worry about that," said Edward. "He feeds on isolation. I think that's why he came here. While he greatly enjoys these symposiums, I think he is the most unlonely of any of us. He revels in Nature and his books. That young fellow seems to know more about almost everything

than all the rest of the bunch combined. From his discussion of femininity I gather old Dr. Middleton did a lot for him."

"I'm not so sure about that," I replied. "I am inclined to think Dr. Middleton is an alibi. I think Rupert's findings are the result of original research. But that doesn't matter. The fact remains that he is an unusually clear thinker and apparently believes just what he says. He is too talented to bury himself in Rolling Prairie."

As we alighted at Edgewood I looked back over the prairie. There was a bright light in the direction from which we came. "What is that?" I asked Frank. "My God," said he, "I believe it is the Roost! If it is, Rupert will need us." Back we galloped the grays. Nor had we gone far when it was evident our fears were well founded. The shack burned like tinder and was all afire long before we reached it. Just as we arrived one side of the flaming loft fell outward and pitched into the yard the iron bed where Rupert had gone to his death. Beneath it lay the remains of our dear youth, the trunk rolled tightly in a heavy woolen blanket, the fair face and hands and feet burned to a crisp. We would lay the blanket on the floor of the wagon and we would take Rupert home. Tenderly the boys raised the body from the

ground and I removed the encasing blanket. Beneath it a soft garment half covered and half revealed the form. Then it was, under the light of the overhead moon and the flames of the burning shack, that we discovered that the body of Rupert Keys was that of a woman.

THE TWINS

One bright summer morning in 1920 I started on my usual Sunday saunter through Jackson Park. As I crossed the crescent skirted by the Lake Shore Drive, back of which lies the substantial residence district of Hyde Park, I paused to chat a moment with Mulvaney, the park policeman. He had long presided over the destinies of the habitues of this deservedly popular resting place. This nook of two or three well-shaded, thickly-shrubbed acres serves as a sort of side yard, or garden, to the occupants of near-by homes.

Mulvaney was no ordinary policeman. He was a big, good-natured, genial, sociable, vigilant fellow, whom you were glad to know.

"How long have you been on this job?" I asked him.

"A long time, Judge," said he, "This is my thirteenth year."

"Must pay you well," I responded.

"That's where you're wrong, if it's wages you mean. I ought to a guv it up long since, but I just can't make up my mind on account of the family."

"Is your wife ill, or just what's the matter?"

"Oh I don't mean the bunch over on West Forty-third; they're all right, and a dom foine lot too they are. I mean this family here. It's this way, Judge. You'd be surprised to know how many people come here regularly. I've been on this job so long that a lot of these folks are just like kin to me. They sit here and loaf or read or air the babies or exercise the dogs, and all of them talk to me; some of them quite confidentially, too. You see that kid carrying the golf-bag? The first year I was here he was in a baby cab. See that white haired woman sitting over beyond the roses there reading a book? Only a few know it, but she's a daughter of an ex-chief justice of the United States. An old maid, smart and queer, not quite all there I guess. I'll tell you on the quiet that she 'tells her troubles to the policeman' because she hasn't anyone else to tell 'em to. She's been right in that same seat with a book most every pleasant day for five summers. She's lonesome, Judge, and I guess I'm the only guy she ever talks to.

"See that shiny cullid lady over yonder sunning herself? That's Araminta Ross, now the happy widow of Mr. George Washington Ross. Minty nearly always spends some time here

Thursdays. That's her day off. She works for the Bivinses over on the boulevard. I can tell you a good one on Minty. Come to think of it I guess it's on Mr. Bivins. Anyway, he told me that several years ago when she applied to them for a job she told Mrs. Bivins she was married to George Washington Ross, lived nearby, and must go home nights. Minty turned out to be an unusually fine maid and the Bivinses prized her highly. After a few months Minty began to have numerous gentlemen callers, entirely too many for a respectable married maid in Hyde Park. Mrs. Bivins asked her husband to have a serious talk with Minty, and warn her that these attentions must stop. So Bivins he braces up and says to Minty, 'What's the meaning of all these men hanging around the kitchen? Didn't you tell me you were a married woman?'

" 'Yes sah, Mr. Bivins, I is married yet, but I ain't a goin' to be much longeh. Wash is jes so good-foh-nuthin I clean lost my tase foh dat niggah, an I'se gwine to git a divohs. I'd had it foh now but the lawyah he wants twenty-five dollahs, and I jes kaint save up no twenty-five dollahs on my present wages.'

" 'Well, Minty, I'll tell you what I'll do. We like you and want you to be contented. I'll lend

you the money, and you can pay it back at your convenience. Go ahead and get your divorce, but meantime cut this company business out.'

" 'You sho is very kind, Mr. Bivins, and I promise you they won't be no moh trouble.'

"Well Bivins said for a long time the skies were clear, and then one night whom should he run into in the kitchen but old Wash himself. The next morning Mr. Bivins took Minty to task. He wanted to know why her ex-husband was coming to see her. Then Minty said, 'Ah spose, Mr. Bivins, ah ought to told you foh dis, but de fac am Wash and me didn't git no divohs. We done talked it ovah and decided we'd rathah have a piano lamp.'

"Oh, I've got a fine assortment all right. Did you ever meet my twins? No? Well, if you'll stick around for a few minutes I'll introduce you to the snappiest pair of twins it will seldom be your good luck to see. That's their seat under the big tree with the thick clump of bushes back of it. There they are almost every day from ten to four, and their performances is better than a vaudyvill. Their names are Doc Morris and Colonel Rankin. Not that them titles mean anything, just nicknames, that's all. The doc never was doctor of anything, but he says when he was

a kid back in Oldtown, Maine, that's what they called him and it stuck. As for the colonel, the nearest he ever came to a military record was when he was marshal at a Kentucky horse race. But you know there is a certain kind of folks that just plain mister doesn't seem to fit.

"I call these old boys my twins because both of them were born on the same day, July 4, 1834. That makes them well up in the eighties now. They are both somewhat deaf and have to holler at each other, so standing back of the bushes, one can always hear all they say. They are both great argifiers, and each calls the other 'the old man.' That is, each thinks the other is a lot older than himself. But this is about all the twin business there is in it, for you never saw two old codgers more unlike. Doc's republican and an ag-what-yecallit, while the colonel claims to be a hardshell baptist, and is a terrible democrat. Doc is a lean and the colonel is a prop. You know everybody is either one or the other. You don't understand me? I mean that the way people are born one half of them has to keep the other half. The leaners are always hard up, fail in business, have a lot of sickness and trouble, always in what they call bad luck. I think mostly always it's because they just naturally are weaklings. Then it's up to

the props to keep both themselves and the leans going at the same time. Anyway it's Doc's son-in-law that keeps the doc, and it's the colonel that keeps his son-in-law. Doc is very lovable, the colonel rather testy. Unless Doc is an awful liar, and I'm not saying he isn't – his kind often are – he has always been a good-fellow, too much of a one for his own good. He started as a schoolmaster in Maine, ran a store at St. Anthony Falls before Minneapolis was born, bought and sold, and bought and sold lands all over the Dakotas. Now rich, now poor, never able to hold his coin, until at last he found himself a few years ago at the end of the toboggan in a livery stable at Dubuque. Then his son-in-law came to the rescue and brought Doc to Chicago so that the old man might end his days in peace and comfort.

"The colonel is a typical Kentuckian. He looks and acts like a race horse. In the early days down in the Blue Grass country he bet on the races, won; got a hoss of his own, then a string of 'em. Made a lot of money on race horses. Gambled in stocks in Chicago. Made more and more. Just before the world's fair bought a lot of Hyde Park real estate. Made close to a million here. Came to Chicago to take care of his son-in-law, or rather

one of them. They live over there in that big house on the boulevard. None of the relatives any good. Guess he keeps 'em all somewhere or other.

"Oh yes, there's one thing more Doc and Colonel have in common: both are very fond of liquor. Many and long are their debates as to what kind and what form is preferable. Poking fun at Doc about his mixed drinks, Colonel announced that in Kentucky a school teacher was fired for teaching the pupils that a strait had water in it. Doc countered with the instance of the Dakota Swede who set his mouth on fire trying to light his pipe too soon after taking a drink of native alcohol. Before I got to listening to these twins," continued Mulvaney, "I didn't know much about how the minds of old fellows work. It's very interesting. These ducks, away up in the eighties, can remember with perfect clearness events of seventy years ago, and clean forget the happenings of last month or last week. 'Spose we'll all get that way, but it's very amusing to hear these old codgers tell each other the same stories over and over again. For instance, I've heard the doc tell the colonel four times that old yarn that ends up 'You've got a nice day fer it,' and invariably it 'reminds' the colonel of the one

about the fellow that was mowing and threw his scythe away. Every time each thinks he is telling the other a brand new yarn.

"There comes the colonel now. See how he jabs his stick into the ground like he was trying to kill something. He's got high blood pressure; oughtn't to walk so fast. Yonder comes the doc too, out the other way. Get his lordly stride and the way he toys with his stick? He's a good feeler even if he hasn't a nickel to his name."

So here it was I met the twins. I hastily tried to evaluate them. There was no mistaking the meaning of those finely formed hands of "the doc." In his closely cropped beard not a hair seemed out of place. He was groomed to perfection. Intelligence and kindliness were stamped in his countenance. Tall, well formed, erect, easy in manner, he didn't look a day over sixty-five. The other, with his big soft hat and white goatee, looked an aged typical Kentucky colonel of the fifties. There was a brown splash on his shirt front that suggested somewhere a hidden plug of navy. Keen black eyes blazed beneath shaggy brows. He was plainly of that nervous type on which the years leave no uncertain tracks. He looked his age. He glanced at me rather furtively, not sure whether I was friend or foe. The two

passed on to their accustomed seat and I proceeded on my walk.

Many times that summer, acting on Mulvaney's suggestion, I stood behind the clump of shrubbery and listened to the good-natured contentions and quips and bandyings of these old boys who knew at first hand the history of four generations, and had been eye-witnesses to a development so marvelous as to be almost beyond the comprehensions of their children's children. Nor were their discussions simply amusing. At times I found them quite instructive. It appears that one morning they had been talking about polar expeditions, expatiating on the merits and demerits of Peary and Cook. I happened along just in time to hear the doc exclaim, "Well, there's only one thing Cook didn't claim, and that is that he explored Symmes's Hole." I pricked up my ears. Not since I was a mere youth had I heard any mention of Symmes's Hole, and I was too young to understand clearly my father's jocular references to it.

"Colonel, mebbe you knew Captain Symmes. If I remember right he came from down your way somewheres. Wonder you didn't join his expedition."

"Considering that he died a dozen years before

I was born," said the colonel, "can't say I was particularly intimate with him."

The doc: "Didn't you fellows build a monument to him down there somewhere?"

The colonel: "Yes, there is one at Hamilton, Ohio, not in Kentucky. I think he deserved it too. It isn't the only remarkable monument in Ohio. They erected one for your friend, Mark Hanna, at the other end of the state. I have seen the Symmes monument. It supports a large hollow globe bearing this inscription: 'John Cleves Symmes was philosopher and originator of the Theory of Concentric Spheres and Polar Voids.' I have a notion you are not very clear as to what Captain Symmes's claims were. If you were not probably too old to read I should advise you to look up volume 65 of *Harper's Magazine* and learn the truth. The whole story is recorded there."

The doc: "All I know is that they used to say that he claimed the earth was a hollow sphere, and that one could sail in at the poles and any time enjoy nice summer weather, and see for himself that all this hibernating stuff was just poppy-cock; for the polar animals simply went inside when the weather got cold, and came back out in the summer."

The colonel: "What you need is education. You should consult the book on this subject written by the captain's son, Americus Symmes. I am proud to say it was printed at Louisville, Kentucky, as late as 1878. Seems to me as reasonable as a lot of stuff the scientists are feeding us today. I'm not claiming Symmes was right, but why the ridicule? If God Almighty wanted to make the earth hollow, guess he could, couldn't he?"

The doc: "I'm scared about you. Next thing you know you'll be claiming with Dowie that the earth is flat, and that you can walk around the rim and pick out your own jumping-off place."

The colonel: "Well mebbe it isn't flat, but I can tell you it's mighty crooked in spots, especially when you get north of Mason and Dixon's line."

Doc knew this was a ruse to draw him into a political argument. He wasn't in the mood, so he naïvely shifted the subject to Darius Green and the Wright brothers, to airplanes and the general automotive outlook. Discussing the future of the autos the doc observed: "I suppose, Colonel, you feel that you might about as well pass on now as live, seeing that the horse is doomed. It is goodbye to Dan Patch, Maude S., Jay Eye See, Axtell, and

Allerton, and all their kind. The thrills of the early days, the successes of the kings and queens of the turf, the things that you fed upon and made you rich, are gone forever. Take off your hat and salute King Gasoline."

"You are mistaken," retorted the colonel. "No machine can ever take the place of the horse. You can't pet an auto; you can't talk to it; you can't teach it anything; it can't love you. They may drive the horse off the street and out of the field, but by God they'll never drive him off the race track until men and women cease to be human. The horse race is a permanent institution. Mark my words: the derby will never die."

"Mebbe you are right," said the doc. "Let's wait up and see."

It was in the field of politics that the badinage of the twins often developed into violent discussion. Clashes were unavoidable, for each was bitterly partisan. From Hamilton to Roosevelt, from Jefferson to Wilson, neither saw any real merit in the party gods of the other. One was a born republican; the other a born democrat. That was why it naturally followed that all discussions were futile. It had been well for each had they agreed to recognize the political field as forbidden ground.

One day as I was approaching their accustomed haunt Mulvaney, who was "listening in," beckoned me to the scene. "My boys are having a terrible row, and I'm afraid there's trouble ahead. You see, it started this way. The colonel got here first. He was dreadfully depressed over the way them senators are nagging Wilson. When the doc came up the very first thing he said was: 'Colonel, you're lookin' pretty glum this morning. I suppose the White House headlines in the morning paper sort of upset your appetite.'

"Then the colonel flashed back, 'Yes, that is what's the matter. It is not my stomach but my soul that is disturbed. I am disgusted that I live in a country where observances of ordinary decency in high places must give way to rotten partisanship, as in Washington. Why should a sick man be bedeviled as is the president by cheap politicians posing as statesmen?'

"And then they fell to it hot and heavy. They fought both wars all over again. They praised or cussed everything and everybody, first on one side then the other, from Pollard-Breckenridge to the league of nations. They are getting louder all the time. This may develop into a real scrap. The colonel is pretty techy and the doc delights in nagging him. Listen!"

The doc: "The trouble is your god is a conceited ass. Why didn't he take Taft or Lodge or somebody with brains along with him to that Paris conference?"

The colonel: "Taft might have served as ballast, but Lodge, my God! You ought to be ashamed to utter the name of that arch-conspirator, that unscrupulous assassin, in the same breath with that of the martyred president. I concede that Lodge has brains, but for what? Jesse James used his brains more honorably than Lodge does his. Lodge is another name for jealousy, vanity, treachery, torture, and partisan murder."

The doc: "Jealousy and vanity! Wilson had a corner on those commodities. His unspeakable conceit caused his downfall. He has no one to blame but himself. If he had given as much thought to the war as he did to suppressing Roosevelt he might have been more respected."

The colonel: "Roosevelt! Bah! Will you never cease harping on that mountebank? He never was anything but a bag of wind. A big blustering showman, the Barnum of the political world. Point to a single constructive act original with him. He was an adept at reaping where others sowed, a blatant thief of political ideas."

The doc: "It does not well become any democrat to criticize a republican so noted. The emblem of your party is a jackass, and with the exception of Grover Cleveland there hasn't been since the civil war any democrat with lungs who hasn't in some way lived up to the emblem. As for Wilson, to whom you say your prayers, I can only say your practice reflects on the intelligence of the worshiper. In twenty years Wilson will be nothing but an unsavory memory. He isn't worth grieving over."

The colonel jumped up and brandished his cane. "I have a mind to thrash you. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You, a narrow, insolent, dirty republican, have the audacity not only to traduce the great Wilson, but to insult me to my face? You can go straight to hell and join your unholy thieving, jealous crowd, and I hope I may never see you again!" Fairly bursting with rage he stamped off towards his home.

As the doc emerged Mulvaney said, "Weren't you a little hard on the colonel? I'm sorry you hurt the old fellow's feelings."

"Mebbe I was," said Doc, "but I've always made it a point not to let any damned democrat get the better of me."

Nevertheless he went slowly homeward re-

gretting the quarrel. He realized he had gone too far with his baiting. He had stabbed to the heart his faithful friend. After dinner he would call on the colonel and apologize.

He rang the bell at the colonel's home and was met by the son-in-law, who said the colonel had had a sudden stroke. He was conscious but could not speak. "Yes," the physician said, "the colonel's friend could come in." Doc entered the chamber door. Over scarlet cheeks the black eyes of the speechless man blazed defiance and hatred and intense scorn. Doc sensed the tragedy. He turned and quietly passed out. It was too late to explain. The colonel died at midnight.

Heavy hearted, Doc returned to his room. Long into the night he sat and grieved and almost prayed. In the morning he failed to arise at his usual hour. They found him dead in bed. A stroke in the night.

Doc and the colonel were cremated the same date. Twins to the end.

DOGFACE

Dogface Jim they called him, not that it is at all unusual for a human being to resemble a dog. A few lines and the cartoonist transforms a collie head into that of a judge, a bulldog into a regular tough, and so on through all the types and breeds. I myself have seen dog resemblances so marked that I half feared to meet certain people on the street lest I be mistaken for some inanimate object, but why go into details? I only wish many of these people had been dogs instead of merely looking like dogs. Dogs can't vote.

Sufficient for the purpose of this dog tale to relate that James Starner was born with features that could not be mistaken. The protruding jaws were the jaws of a dog. The sharp, closely set front teeth, the eye teeth veritable canine tusks which at times showed dangerously, confirmed the settled conviction that Jim was a human freak. Stony Creek had its theory. It may not have been scientific, but it was satisfying.

I know I shall not have the approbation of Doc Evans, the Mayos, and all members of the Amer-

ican Medical Association capable of charging a minimum of three hundred dollars for professional service, but facts are facts, and when one has such distinguished authority as the Bible and Jacob of old on his side in the discussion of prenatal influences, what is the inevitable conclusion? Didn't Jacob make good? Shall one deny the thirtieth chapter of Genesis?

There is not the slightest doubt that every man, woman, and child in Stony Creek settlement, Home county, Ohio, believed that Jerusha Starner's baby was "marked." Of course a few there were who were so cruel as to hint that Jerusha – but I dismiss that, and confine myself to the known facts.

Jerusha, unmarried at thirty, had always been considered somewhat irregular, and when she found she was with child she steadfastly refused to reveal the identity of the sire, and as she died a few days after Jim's birth the mystery remained unsolved. Nevertheless everybody remembered how she had been attacked by a huge mastiff while carrying the baby and doubtless would have been torn limb from limb had not a neighbor appeared on the scene in the nick of time and dispatched the enraged dog instantly.

As it was, she fainted from fright and was ill for days. Naturally the child was marked.

The babe was about to be consigned to the asylum for orphans when Adolph Steck came to the rescue. The Stecks were prosperous middle-aged people who not long before had lost their only son. They offered to provide a home for the unfortunate child. They were exceedingly kind-hearted and generous people, and it was with gratitude that the poor Starners accepted the offer to take the squirming bastard off their hands. There was nothing in the earlier years of the boy's growth except a rather queerly shaped face to stamp him as an isolated type. He was a faithful, obedient, not overly smart child, very appreciative of attention, willing, industrious, and affectionate. Not until he was of school age and mingled closely with the boys of the community did he begin to develop his dog-like tendencies. It was noticed that he possessed an almost uncanny sense of smell. He could far outrun any of his companions. When teased he snarled and snapped his white teeth. But his playmates soon grew careful not to draw "Dogface," as they came to call him, into any serious encounters, for he fought with his teeth and was without fear.

Boys much older than he came to have a wholesome respect for Dogface, who never started any trouble, but who defended himself mercilessly.

It was not, however, until the age of puberty that he displayed tendencies that emphasized his dual nature. Stories were current that Dogface had fits, and during these attacks would bark furiously and deport himself like a dog. The Stecks had never seen any proof of these stories, and were disinclined to believe them. But one night after Jim – now nearly seventeen – had gone upstairs to bed the Stecks heard peculiar wailing sounds that seemed to emit from the loft, so Adolph quietly crept upstairs to discover Jim sitting in night dress, at the open window, gazing into the big full harvest moon and baying piteously. Steck quietly led the boy to his bed, told him it was time to go to sleep, drew the shade, and left him. Then it was he sensed that Jim was in reality the victim of a terrible malady and much needed watching and help. He soon discovered that any intense excitement was liable to bring on one of these barking fits, and he treated Jim with the utmost tenderness and precaution. As Steck studied him closely he discovered more and more habits that had heretofore passed unnoticed. He observed that at the meals

Jim always selected portions of meat that contained bone. He seemed to take special delight in gnawing the leg of a fowl until all vestige of flesh had disappeared, and he had been seen carrying bones away and hiding them. The boy could detect odors that no one else seemed to notice. One illustration will serve to show how this peculiarity asserted itself. Jim was fond of hunting, and often through his scent could locate game that companions failed to discover. It had been rumored that a huge catamount had been heard and even seen in the Big Woods, an immense tract of woodland on the Stony Creek ridge. Nearby farmers had lost sheep, pigs, and poultry, and Jake Shire asserted he actually saw the animal carrying off one of his lambs. Jim was greatly impressed with this story and, being a good shot, had hoped he might be so fortunate as to get a chance at the catamount. On this particular day he was one of a group of four squirrel hunters who were working the Big Woods. The four separated and, advancing in parallel lines a few rods apart, scoured the tract for game. Suddenly a terrific barking broke the quiet. There was Jim at the base of a great white oak, his gun thrown aside, clawing at the trunk of the tree and barking furiously. They could not imagine

what excitement had precipitated the fit which showed no sign of abatement. At last one of the hunters discovered in the highest crotch of the great tree an immense catamount motionlessly hugging the branch, its color so closely blending into the bark that only from one point could the animal be plainly seen. A well directed shot brought the beast to the ground, but not until the pelt had been removed and the party proceeded did Dogface cease to bark.

Another incident was not without humor. Hickstown, at the crossroad on the pike, the nearest village to the Stony Creek settlement, consisted of an oil station, a post office, a general store, a Methodist church, and a few houses. There was "protracted meeting" at the church. Old Russell, the preacher, had only one eye, but he made up for this shortage in lungs. This particular night he had as aids a preacher from Spillville, and a church colporteur who was noted for his singing. It was to be the last night of the revival, and a supreme effort was put forth to bring all stragglers into the fold. There was much singing, shouting, lusty Amens and Glory to Gods, as one followed another to the mourners' bench. What took place inside of Jim no one knows, but the excitement was too much for him

and the fit came on in all its fullness. Barking fearfully he fairly jumped to the mourners' bench, closed his jaws on the collar of the nearest supplicant, shook him like a rat, and then attacked the next in line. The others, including two screaming women, skedaddled to the door with Jim lustily yelping in pursuit. The panicky congregation rushed out, and the Hickstown revival was over.

But it was at the picnic at Brush Lake that Dogface achieved local immortality. It was the Fourth of July, and all the residents of Stony Creek and the adjacent region were there. A boat containing two farmers and their wives and a little child capsized within a hundred yards of the shore. The men were good swimmers, and the women clung to the overturned boat, but the child quickly sank. Dogface saw the accident and in a jiffy had shed his outer garments and barking loudly swam swiftly to the rescue. As the child came up the third time he seized it with his strong jaws and promptly bore it to safety. Dropping his bundle on the sand he shook himself like a wet dog, picked up his clothes and departed without a word, or shall I say a bark, for the cold water had evidently had a salutary effect. In the eyes of his neighbors Dogface had

become a hero, and thereafter they looked with leniency on all of his acts and tried always to be kind and merciful.

Last summer I was motoring from Columbus to Akron and accidentally discovered that the new highway passed through Hickstown. I would stop and inquire about Dogface, for it was now five years since I had visited there, had met this peculiar fellow, and had heard these stories. I asked the postmaster where I could find Dogface. He pointed to a white cross at the nearby corner. "That's the way we mark auto deaths in Ohio. That's where the big Packard ran over Dogface last summer. Lived about an hour. Barked all the time till he died. If you go back of the church yonder into the graveyard, you'll see a big new shiny tombstone. That's his. Steck put up a good one, for he thought a lot of Jim, and Steck always does things right. Jim was a doggone good boy. We miss him a lot. Twasn't his fault he was marked."

HIS LAST CLAIM

Number Four was three hours late at Pikeston. All day long the sturdy little engine had ploughed through the constantly deepening drifts while the storm king sifted the blinding, dry, cutting crystals as food for the fierce blizzard that swooped down on the prairies of Minnesota. The thickets were a mass of ice. The willows creaked mournfully under their shining coats of mail. Every living thing seemed to have gone to shelter. It was yet eighty miles to Millard, the junction with the main line.

About an improvised table in the smoker sat three men playing pitch – the traveling man's sole diversion on a long ride on a dismal day. There was Spooner, the insurance adjuster from Des Moines; Cohen, the fur man, trying to reach Dunbar in time for the night train for Chicago and home; and Moon, representing a wholesale grocery house at Dunbar.

There was no time to lose at Pikeston. Two students returning from the holiday vacation and two farmers on their way back from a home-

seekers' excursion were the only passengers from Pikeston. The telegraph-operator-baggage-man-ticket-agent threw into the mail car the snowy sacks, the little engine gave the signal for starting, and after much puffing and sputtering and slipping of drivers again began to creep from under the gray blanket of the blizzard.

At the last moment another passenger swung on to the front platform of the smoker. His expensive fur-lined coat, his well-made suit, his tie adorned with a large diamond pin – all marked him as somewhat different from the average patron of the "branch" train in northern Iowa. He paused at the door to shake the snow from his garments and to catch his breath, for it was evident that he had barely boarded the train.

"Oho," said Moon, "there's Jim Deeter. It's ten to one you will find him somewhere along the line of the C. & X., regardless of time and tide."

"Probably been out looking after his traps," responded Spooner sarcastically.

"Come on, Jim, and sit in the game," called Moon. "We need some new coin. We've changed what we have so often since noon that we've worn the feathers off the eagle and the mane off the buffalo."

Deeter came down the aisle, saluting all, and replied, "Not just yet. I want to see Miller, the conductor, and then I must jump off at Baxter and send a wire. There's a little birthday party waiting for me down at Beaver Falls. Some of the boys are coming in to talk over the congressional situation. I must wire for a team to meet me at Millard. We are just getting out from the edge of the storm and we ought to make pretty good time the rest of the trip. I'll see you a little later."

"Who iss your friend?" asked Cohen. "Iss he also in the fur business? You speak already about some traps."

"No," said Moon, "he is a claim agent for the C. & X. He lives at Beaver Falls. He is a fine fellow – smart as you find 'em. If Chief Tinsley ever dies Jim will get the Chicago job all right."

"Moon," said Spooner slowly, "I wonder if you really think you are telling Cohen the truth. I know Jim Deeter almost as well as he knows himself. I will concede that he is a 'contributory negligence' expert; but his primary business is that of pass peddler, judge maker, and jury-fixer. He is a shrewd, undependable, unprincipled, dishonest cuss who would throw his closest chum if he could figure the slightest advantage for him-

self. I would hate to leave the fifth degree lying around loose anywhere lest he might trade it off for crooked testimony in a claim case."

"Well," responded Moon, "he knows a lot of people and he has the reputation of being on the inside in the big political deals of the state."

"Yes," said Spooner, "he knows people enough, especially the courthouse hangers-on, the ne'er-do-wells of the poolroom and the patrons of the 'red light.' I live at the capital and there is some truth in what you say in regard to political affairs. He is the man Friday for Colonel Minter, the Nestor of Iowa lobbyists. I doubt not that he is a profitable man for the C. & X.; but his chief energies are employed, not in adjusting legitimate claims against the C. & X., but by imposition on sufferers, by taking advantage of ignorance, and by the manipulation of legal processes to prevent justice. Of course he prefers to settle out of court. When Casey's engine turned over at Rexford Bridge and Casey was blinded for life by escaping steam, didn't Jim settle with Casey for five hundred dollars and didn't Mrs. Casey know that Jim Deeter could get witnesses to prove that Casey had cataracts on both eyes and would have gone blind anyway in a few weeks? When Tim Sullivan was knocked off the caboose by a swing-

ing door on a passing freight and had both legs broken, didn't Jim Deeter persuade Tim to take a hundred dollars in full of all claims because Tim had no right to be standing on the caboose steps? When Bob Claypool was thrown fifteen feet against a red-hot stove as a wild coal car bumped into the caboose on a siding, didn't Jim Deeter prove by two of these fine acquaintances of his that Claypool was drunk and fell on the stove, although Claypool never took a drop of liquor in his life? Well, if Jim Deeter is a man, I am glad to say I am not – that's all I have to say!"

Moon handed the cards to him. "Now that you've got rid of it," said he, "suppose you deal."

In the meantime Deeter was in the rear car with Miller, the conductor, who was checking up his report. "How do you come to be on Number Four?" asked Miller, "I thought you told me you expected to get through in Pikeston yesterday."

"The fact is," said Deeter, "we had a close shave. The verdict was returned in less than fifteen minutes before your flyer snailed in."

"How did it go?" asked Miller.

"Olson gets two hundred dollars," responded the other, "and he pays the hospital fees for his beloved wife. I offered to settle for five hundred dollars, but that long-legged lawyer at Dunbar

stumbled into a winning last year in a case against the C. & X. and advised Olson to fight, so I thought I would give him a little medicine in the sublime art of suing a railroad. Here's the whole thing in a nutshell: my lifelong friend for the last four years, Doc Weems, the veterinary, decided that the near horse in Olson's thousand-dollar team killed by your dinky old engine on Number Four was a wind-sucker and wouldn't bring fifty dollars in an open market, and that the off one had blemishes which would render him unsalable to anyone except a blind man. Moreover, I saw to it that the right honorable Steve Jenks was on the jury. Mrs. Steve and Mrs. Olson are bosom enemies, and it didn't eat Steve any that Mrs. Olson's shoulder was put out of commission in the little encounter with the aforesaid locomotive. Steve simply tired the pin-head jurymen out. Result: two hundred dollars; not two thousand.

"By the way, Miller, how is McGee getting along with the engine? If he gets smart, say the word and I will see to it that the superintendent sets him back to his old job. He has got a bunch with him in the shops down at Dunbar and I prefer to have him with us, but he has got to remember how he got his promotion."

"Well," said Miller, "he is a little rough at times, sort of careless, and seems to forget that he is running a passenger train; but I like the fellow and I think he is going to make good."

"All right," said Deeter, "just as you say. We are slowing up for Harton. I must drop off here and send a wire. Then I am going forward with that bunch of gamblers in the smoker and try to earn an honest dollar."

Deeter joined the trio in the smoker and asked for a hand. The storm had ceased and Number Four was making up time. She paused a moment at Cottrell, the excuse for stopping being an elevator, a water tank and a depot made out of a discarded freight car. Nevertheless, Number Four took on a passenger at Cottrell.

"Good-bye, mother," said the fur-clothed farmer who lifted her tenderly on to the steps of the car. "I hope you will feel better and get home safe."

"I do feel better now," responded the old lady, "and I am sure I shall get along all right. Good-bye."

The old lady took a seat near the door. Back of her were the two students, and farther down the aisle the Illinois farmers. After a few minutes she arose and went to the door. The brakeman

passing through the train accosted her: "Lady, you're not allowed to stand out there. Come on inside."

"I am sick," she replied, "and the cold air feels good."

There was plenty of air surely, for there were no hooded vestibules on Number Four. Jim Deeter could tell if he would why the Railway Commission failed to order the C. & X. thus to equip the "branch" trains.

In a few minutes the woman, faint, arose and again went to the platform. The train was pulling into Nashville when there was an instant stop that unseated the quartette in the smoker and pitched cards and table into the aisle.

"That fool Magee thinks he is still running the local freight," said Deeter, as they readjusted the table and resumed the game. After a brief delay the train drew up to the station, but it was twenty minutes before it left Nashville. As the conductor came into the smoker Deeter said, "Well, Miller, if this is an example of the fine skill of Magee I think you'd better follow my advice."

"It's bad enough, Deeter," said the conductor. "The local freight that took the siding for Number Four failed to clear. We bumped into her and

if Magee had been a quarter of a second slower with the air there would have been a fine mess. The damage to the engine was slight, but I guess you've got some work cut out for you all right!"

"Magee get hurt?" asked Deeter.

"No," said Miller, "but an old lady that got on at Cottrell was on the front platform of the rear coach when Magee applied the brakes. She either jumped or was thrown from the train when the impact came. Dr. Holmes happened to be at the station when they carried her in. He examined her and said her neck was broken. There wasn't a thing about her to identify her. We took the body into the baggage car and I wired the agent at Dunbar to have Woods, the undertaker, meet the train. Her ticket was the return end of a round trip from Dunbar to Cottrell."

Deeter hastened back to the coach to interview the passengers who sat near. Explaining his interest in the case he took the names and addresses of the two students. They told of hearing the admonition of the brakeman. Deeter drew out his pocketbook and gave each of the boys a twenty-dollar bill. "This," he said, "to pay your expenses if I have to send for you, which is not probable." Taking his fountain pen from his pocket, he wrote a few lines. "Just sign this re-

ceipt so I'll have a record of it," said he. The boys signed the receipt without stopping to read it. This was what it said: "Against the repeated protests of the train men the woman who was said to have fallen from the train at Nashville December 30, 1910, insisted on standing on the platform. She acted queerly as if contemplating suicide."

Going back to the seat where the two farmers were, he said: "You noticed of course that the woman who got on a couple of stations back acted queerly. It's a wonder you didn't guess she was planning to throw herself from the train."

"Yes," said one of the men, "Chris said to me that very thing; that the woman didn't act natural like."

"Why, she was crazy as a bat," said Deeter. "It's too bad that anyone will let folks like that travel alone. If you fellows don't mind I'll just take down your names, so if any of the friends want to write you they will know how to reach you."

He dropped into a seat and hastily reviewed the case. It offered few difficulties. At no place along the line had he a wider acquaintance in village and country around. On the back of an envelope he made a brief memorandum and

noted the names of the few whom he could call upon if subsequent developments necessitated aid. He would go to Dunbar in the morning and see the body and return to Nashville on the late train. His evening program need not suffer. Already he could see around the long curve the switch lights at Millard Junction. His team and cutter awaited him.

A half hour later the belated host was presenting his apologies to his waiting guests. His party could scarcely be called a strictly social affair, for among the guests were the standpat national committee chairman, the congressional committeeman, two or three newspaper men, and the party leaders of the county. There was a vacancy in a federal judgeship. The congressman from the district had recently died, and a special election was imminent. There were serious defections to the progressives, and for the first time in ten years Deeter was alarmed at the outlook. It was past midnight when the party broke up.

Mrs. Deeter, having done her part, had prudently retired early in the evening. Deeter was tired in body and mind. He dropped into a chair before the fireplace for a short, quieting smoke before going to bed. Scarcely was he seated when the telephone rang. He rose to answer the call.

"Is that you, Jim? This is Woods at Dunbar. Sorry to call you at this hour, but I thought I ought to do it. Miller wired me to meet Number Four and take charge of the body of a woman that was killed at Nashville. I hate to tell you this, Jim, but I fear it is your mother."

"Impossible," said Deeter. "She was in town Monday when I left. Hold the line a minute." He rushed to his wife's bedroom. "Emma, did you see mother or hear from her today?" he hurriedly asked.

"No," she replied. "She went to Dunbar to visit Tuesday and said she might be gone for several days. She said she wanted to go and see your brother Ed out on the farm in Colton county."

Returning to the 'phone Deeter continued, "Woods, what reason have you for believing it is she?"

"I'm mighty sorry, Jim, but we know it. Her old acquaintance – my assistant – Sam Klein, recognized her. Indeed, he talked with her Tuesday at the station and she told him she was going up to Ed's for a few days. We got Ed on long distance about an hour ago and he said she came all right but grew so homesick he took her over to Cottrell and put her on Number Four. If there's

anything I can do, let me know. No need to come down until morning. Good-bye."

Mechanically Deeter hung up the receiver, his first conscious thought being that he would not tell his wife until morning. As he returned to his seat he stooped to pick up an envelope that had dropped from his pocket and lay on the floor beside his chair. It was the envelope on which he had made the notes concerning the Nashville tragedy. Unconsciously he drew out his watch and opened it. There in the case was the mother's picture – his mother. As he gazed into the fire there seemed to come from the flames the ghosts of forfeited friendships, of shattered confidences, of silent scorn, of secret contempt of associates who knew the character of his occupation. It was three hours before Jim Deeter, exhausted, fell asleep in his chair. Before that time, however, he had rung for a messenger and delivered to him this message:

Mr. James Tinsley
General Claim Agent
C. & X. R. R. Chicago

Please accept my resignation to take effect immediately. I am obliged to devote my entire time to my business interests here.

JAMES DEETER

KLUPP'S GATE

Dennis O'Ryan was the only son of Michael and Nora O'Ryan. In a flood of emigration from Pennsylvania the O'Ryans had been left high and dry on a Holmes county, Ohio, hillside. I have seen a lone cedar tree in an Iowa woods, miles away from any of its species, struggling along in its environment of maples and elms almost pitiful in its isolation. So it was with the O'Ryans. They were twenty miles from a Catholic church and not a neighbor of the faith nearer than Killbuck, six miles away. Not that it made much difference with Michael. His sins troubled him little, and as for home and neighborhood worries, they could all be drowned at Killbuck in the little brown jug. But Nora was a woman, and she grieved constantly under the deprivations of the solaces that had once been hers. Especially for Dennis, now in his twentieth year. She knew he was slipping, slipping away from her influences and early teachings. Then there was Mary McLaughlin, the daughter of the Methodist minister at Bald Hill. The only reason why there was the

village of Bald Hill was because it was the highest point of the region, and its residents could always look down upon their neighbors. The founders of Bald Hill got up so high that the new Fort Wayne railroad missed them by five miles, so the village continued what it had been for years, forty or fifty houses struggling along the roadway for a half mile. The street ended in the east at the Presbyterian church, in the west at the Methodist church, with a decadent Campbellite one midway between. At the crossroads was the general store, where Jere Grady, gentleman, later governor of Ohio, sold calico, jeans, and brown sheeting, staple groceries and drugs. Back of the store was the warehouse. It was filled on this August night in 1879 with wool stored by the farmers for safe keeping with the reliable Grady until the promised rise in price was forthcoming. On Saturday nights the benches and chairs on the long platform at the side of Grady's store were filled with sweaty farmers "in town" ostensibly for the weekly mail and groceries, but really to foregather in discussion of politics and to indulge in community gossip. Would the price of wool go up? Why Peter Horner's boy ran away. Did Castle's oats fall down because he over-manured the field? Would the county ever fix the Jenkins

culvert? Such were the ponderous questions discussed Saturday nights at Grady's amidst much chewing, smoking, whittling, and coarse language. John Sheetz, born in Switzerland, rode up, tied his horse to a vacant post, took the cover off his shining cornet, and speaking pleasantly to all, passed on down street to the old vacant store for the weekly band practice; Jim Taylor, the solo alto, and Bill Shire, the tuba, followed him. During a moment's lull while Jim Steck, the village humorist, was thinking up a new story, Dennis O'Ryan appeared. He had a wonderfully sonorous voice and a most fetching smile. His "good evenings" didn't sound like mere formality. He was Irish to the core. He did not linger with the loafers but passed into the store, bought a sack of candy, and hastened down the street to the parsonage where Reverend McLaughlin was putting the finishing touches on the morning sermon, and Mary on the steps was gravely, thoughtfully waiting for Dennis. As he passed the group at Grady's Jim Steck said: "Mebbe you fellows don't know it but there's the smartest cuss in this whole Bald Hill neighborhood. Our teacher says he knows a lot more than most college fellows. I'll bet you that actor man Barrett couldn't say 'Good evening' the way that boy

kin, if he was to try a hundred years, and I'll tell you another thing: if Dennis O'Ryan had been a livin' in Springfield, Illinois, when Old Abe was a showin' he'd a give Abe a run for his money. He's an offul lot like Abe only better lookin'."

"Well, I'll say this," said Seth Shank, "he has Abe skinned at one point, that's the wimmin. They say Lincoln was afeard of most all of them. This god of our'n Jim haint been skeert of 'em enuf if what I hear is so, and he's goin' to git his comeuppance pretty damn quick one of these days, and it won't be snowin' then either. I ain't sayin' nothin' that nobody can kote, but my eyesight ain't failin' me yet. Guess you'll find one of Dennis's girls growin' pretty fast before the summer's over."

There was silence in the group. Seth bit off another chunk of navy, then turning to Bill Jones said: "I hear you are crossin' them Chester Whites and Poland Chinys. That crossin' business is all right for hogs, but crossin' Catholics and Methodists is damned troublous breedin'." The remark was too deep for Bill, and if Jim Steck got the point he was discreet enough to head off any discussion of his idol, for he immediately proceeded to tell the new one that he got from a

Cleveland drummer, and apparently Dennis was forgotten.

When an hour or two later Dennis left Mary and headed homeward he avoided the thinning group at the store. He was in no mood to see any one. That had been a momentous interview with Mary McLaughlin. Lives had been at stake. It had looked like the end of the road. As he passed the Presbyterian graveyard the tombstones under the light of the high harvest moon seemed to him unusually spectral. He wondered whether death was the end, and whether after all it was not as much to be welcomed as feared. As for hell, what did the preachers know about it, or heaven either more than he? He walked slowly up the stony, brushy road towards Klupp's Gate, which stood at the summit. Shank's gate across the way was just a gate, but Klupp's Gate was a place. It was not merely the entrance to the long, narrow lane that led back to the Klupp house and the big spring; it was the parting place and the forum of all the State Road boys on their way home from the usual Saturday night visit to the village and from church Sundays. The last panel of the stake-and-rider fence had been lowered to a comfortable height and crowned with a wide chestnut rail that had been worn shiny as a seat. A

great, flat, moss-covered sandstone rock served the same purpose, and the fence corners were carpeted with virgin bluegrass sod. The gang were all there. The Klupps, who kept goats and smelled goaty, the scarfaced Wells boys, the red-headed Miller twins, Seth Shank's boy, Tim, twelve and tough. He could spit farther and straighter than any one, and was the dirtiest of the lot. Then there was Tom Taylor, age twenty-five and bearded; and all the South Brook bunch. Dennis approached, greeted them pleasantly, chatted rather absent-mindedly for a few moments, and then, declining their requests to stay and visit, crossed the field to the Big Woods, through which the path wound among huge hollow-trunked chestnuts and century-old white oaks to the edge of the home farm.

"Dennis don't act natural," said Jack Wells, "seems worried about suthin'."

"He haint been here for a long time," said Chris Miller. "Guess he's findin' petticoats more to his likin' than us fellers."

"Well," said Tim Shank, "I'll tell you what I think. One night, about a month ago, I was settin' here thinkin' some of you fellers'd happen along when I seen a man and woman comin' out of the Big Woods. I dropped over the fence into

the corner and thought I'd hide 'til they passed by. But bigosh they set right there on the fence and talked for a long time. They was Dennis and Mary McLaughlin. I couldn't hear her very plain coz she was cryin' a lot, but she said somethin' about fightin' and disgrace and how she couldn't stand it and would rather die and couldn't they get married in spite of the old folks? Then Dennis said if there was any dyin' it would be two of 'em. He said, 'Let's wait another month and mebbe things will be different.' Said he'd go to Millersburg to-morrow and see Doc Weems, who was his friend, and that he'd make one more try to get his mother to give in. Then they got down and went on towards town. Now I'll bet that's what's eatin' Dennis. They want to get married, and his mother won't let him. I heard her say myself, 'If I ever get hold of that scut alone I'll fix her so she won't be leadin' my Denny on, nor no one else neither.' Now don't you fellers give me away or Dad will skin me. I haint told nobody but him, and he just grinned and said, 'You keep your mouth shet fur hell's goin' to be a poppin' now sure enough.' "

Then spoke Tom Taylor: "All I've got to say is this, Tim. Don't you ever try to be a doctor. You're no good as a diagonizer. You don't read

your symptoms right. Dennis is through at Klupp's Gate. He's got bigger taters to peel than Mother O'Ryan and Father McLaughlin. I'm goin' home."

Dennis stopped at the entrance to the woods, put in his coat pocket a few stones and cut from a limb a walking stick. Not that he was afraid, just a little preparation in case of accident. There were stories afloat that a catamount had been seen in a woods on the next ridge. One of the Shires boys declared he saw it carry off a lamb, and different people had seen its tracks. O'Ryan was in no haste now that he was alone. Slowly he sauntered through the woods. Each step seemed to say: "Can I do it? Do I dare?" He paused a moment as he crossed the fence that divided the wood and was startled by the sudden hoot of an owl in a nearby tree. Then he observed that less than fifty feet from the path there glared at him what appeared to be a pair of fiery eyes. Selecting a rock from his pocket he took a good aim, and with all his force hurled the rock at the supposed head. One of the "eyes" fell out as the stone struck the rotten log, for it was only two bits of phosphorus that glared at him. He wished that other dangers he was facing might happily turn out to be phosphoric. As he came to the

end of the wood's path again he sat and pondered. It was not a night for sleep. In the bright light of the harvest moon on his right by the line of feathery fog he could trace the Killbuck River miles away. To the left the big black Mohican hills rolled toward the horizon, and in between the golden shock-filled fields absorbed the yellow moon. Dennis observed that in one of the trees of the peach orchard across the way there hung a great gray cone almost as big around as his body, the home of an immense colony of black hornets. That very day one of the insects, pursuing a fly, had painfully stung the young man on his handsome face. He would avenge himself on this proud nest. He gloated with satisfaction as he hurled a well directed stone straight through the home of the hated insects. No regrets at the death and destruction. No, if he had his way he would consign to hell where they belong all useless, stinging, biting things. Yes, even the human ones. What a lot of them at Bald Hill! But the program that he and Mary had mapped out that evening called for a different sort of nerve than attacking a hornet's nest at night. . . Yes, he would do it, he would no longer waver, but not to-night. Perhaps to-morrow or the day after.

All day he had plowed in the stubble field that

now lay between him and the house called home. He must at least once more have his feet kissed by the warm soil, soft in the fresh upturning. Barefooted, carrying his shoes, slowly he crossed the field. Again he stopped as he reached the orchard where the Early Harvest apples shone in the moonlight like yellow flowers. . . Not to-night. No he would bathe his feet and head in the great trough below the spring house, quietly slip into bed and await to-morrow.

Michael O'Ryan had not returned from Killbuck. His spree usually lasted four or five days, and this was but the second. Dennis undressed below and noiselessly crept up the stairs to the one large sleeping room. There was no screen between his bed and that of his parents other than strings of dried apples suspended from the joists. But Mrs. O'Ryan was not asleep. Scarcely had the boy lain down until she called him to come and sit at her side.

"Oh Denny, my boy," she cried, "I am so frightened, so trembly, that I thought I should die before you could get home. When I saw that himself would not return I went to bed and fell asleep. I was awakened by a horrible dream. I dreamed that I was walking in the Big Woods when I came upon the dead bodies of you and

Mary, lying there side by side, and as I stood and grieved, suddenly your eyes opened and looking straight into my own you said, 'Mother, may God forgive you for this,' and then again the corpse. Oh, Denny, my heart is breaking. I have been wrong, wrong, wrong. I'm so ashamed that I can hardly speak to you. It wasn't only because she was a Methodist that I've been so mean to Mary; it was my jealousy. I didn't want to lose you. With himself so worthless and half the time drunk you were my only comfort. My selfishness died while I was lyin' here waitin' for you to come home. Now I want you to marry Mary. I want you to be happy. If you love her enough you will be happy in spite of everybody and everything in the world. Now kiss me, my boy, and tell me I am forgiven."

"Wait a minute," said Dennis, "I fear your advice comes too late. A week or so ago we decided that Mary should try once more to make peace with her father and I with you. If we lost we would go somewhere – even into the Big Woods if necessary – leave it to you two to fight out after we were gone. We decided that all the churches in the world should not deter us from our course. We found that if we were to get married it must be right away before – well, be-

fore the Bald Hill hornets found us. I had determined to tell you this to-morrow, and I knew it would hurt you terribly. Now you make it quite easy, and I am very happy. You see everything is settled. Mary and I decided that to-night. There will be no desertion, no suicides, no apologies, no hornets. To-night I took her a letter I got a day or two ago. It was from Bob Garrett out in Iowa. He urges me to come at once. He says there is a big boom on and that he can guarantee jobs a plenty. 'Sell your rocky old eighty and get for it here a whole section of real land' is the way he ends the letter. So it's Iowa for Mary and me. We leave next Thursday, August 20, for Casey, Iowa. We'll get married in Chicago on the way through. I leave it to you to see that Dad stays sober long enough to accept Bill Sloan's standing offer on the eighty and then you follow the trail to Iowa. Mary will probably need you very much about the middle of February.

"The eyes were phosphorus," mused Dennis as he dropped asleep.

CASEY AND SON

The village of Clio is in the heart of a famous resort region in Northern Michigan. If it had not been for the era of road building, and the consequent rapid development of the resorts that dot the shores of the cluster of nearby lakes, there never would have been any Casey's store at Clio. Casey had been one of the many poor farmers that tried to live on the cut-over lands that once were covered by the giant pines which fell under the ruthless axes of the lumber kings. He lived, and that was all. He had married a good looking Indian girl, industrious, capable, and kind. The little Caseys came with almost alarming frequency. Some way Casey must reach out to feed and clothe the growing brood. He tried the experiment of killing occasionally an animal and peddling the meat to resorters, supplementing this with eggs, chickens, berries, and garden stuff. It worked. In a couple of years he concluded to move to Clio and open a little grocery store. Casey had a way with him that the women liked, and his wife, always at the store helping except

WHERE QUIET REIGNS

when she took a few days' vacation every year or so bringing into the world a new Casey, was a distinct asset. Casey prospered, and it was a very neat orderly little store into which I went one August morning a dozen years ago to lay in a supply of food for our camp five miles away. I noted that it was Chicago meat that he sold; that there was no low water-mark display of vegetables on the sidewalk; no cats sunning themselves in the fresh fruit window. Under the orderly eye of his dark-haired mate, the store was a credit to Casey and to Clio.

"Good morning, Casey," I greted him. "I hope you are right with the world."

"Judge, I'm glad to see you, and looking so fine, too," he responded, with a hearty hand shake, first using a nearby towel, for he was at the meat block. He always persisted in calling me "Judge," having early confused me with some of my jurist neighbors.

"Aren't you ever going to drop that 'Judge' business," I continued. "You see, Casey, I know nothing about courts, not even a police court. I have never been on a jury; I have never sued or been sued. I am as far from a judge as you from a bishop."

"I'd rather not try to change," he said, "I

might find myself calling you something worse:"

"All right," said I, "as you please, but neighbor or friend is the only title I aspire to. What's the matter, Casey? You don't look quite yourself this morning."

"Just a little tired, that's all, and worryin' about the kids, now that she isn't here."

"What do you mean by that," I asked.

"If you'll wait a minute I'll tell you the whole story. In the first place little Tommy, he's almost five now, guv me an awful scare. Day before yisterday when the 'flyer' stopped at the station, what did the little divvle do but crawl under the train to see what it looked like from below. Just as the conductor called 'all aboard' a bystander saw Tommy crawling out right in front of the wheels. He grabbed him, and yanked him out just as the wheels grazed his little black head. When I heard about it I guv him hell, and he made himself scarce all day. I forgot all about him, and not till mornin' when I counted 'em at breakfast did I know he was gone. I hurried over to the street but nobody seemed to have saw him the night before at all. I was awful worrit. I concluded he had got bumped by an auto or had fell into the river. Well, sir, about nine o'clock in the morning here comes Pete Johnson leadin'

him into the store. 'Where do you think I found him,' says Pete. 'The little peanut had sneaked into a front seat at the picture show last night and had fell asleep, and was overlooked when we locked up. When we went in a bit ago to sweep out, there he was, sittin' in the front row, still asleep.'

"But Judge, Tommy's carrins-on are merely incidental to my main trouble and they wouldn't have happened at all if she had been here."

"Surely you do not mean that she has left you, Casey, that would be terrible."

"That's what I am leadin' up to. You see, it was this way. Bill – do you know Bill; he's third from the top – has been behavin' in a very un-Caseylike manner for more'n a year. Kind of mopey and dopey like. Fell behind at school; goes around with his mouth open, just sort of good for nuthin. Doc Blower said he had andynoids and tonsils, and that he ought to have a lot of things cut out. 'Go to it,' I said, 'for I don't want to have half baked kids around to feed, but be sure to do no more cuttin' than is necessary. Don't spoil him.' Then he told me he couldn't do it himself at all; that it was a job for the hospital at Cedaro, and should be done at once. So there was nothin' else to do but for

her to take the boy to the hospital, and this just at the height of the season too, when she was needed in the store every minute, and no one to take her place. So yisterday morning she hops onto the local and takes Bill to the hospital. I was so dom busy all day, and so upset over Tommy's doins, that I clean forgot to call her up until after supper. When I did get the hospital a nurse answered. I said, 'This is Casey. How's my boy?' 'Oh, he's all right. The doctor took out his tonsils and andynoids.' 'Did he holler much?' 'No, they gave him something so he hardly knew what was being done. He's feelin' fine, but at that not doing quite so well as the girl.'

" 'Oh, it's the wrong Casey you have!' sez I. 'I hain't got no girl there.'

" 'Yes you have, Mr. Casey. She's now five hours old, and both she and Mrs. Casey are doing well. Don't worry. Goodbye.'

"So that's what's eatin' me. I'm overworked. My wife promised that she wouldn't have that dom kid until the season was over; but takin' Bill up there, and seein' all them nurses and doctors and nice beds, it seems she just couldn't wait. Anyway that's one more for meals and shoes and books and things. You don't know where I could get a good girl to tend store for a

few days, do you? Still that wouldn't help much. She's worth more in the store than all the clerks in town, and that includes me.

"I dunno, mebbe we didn't figger right. How many pounds of bacon was it you wanted?"

One October day, twelve years later, our party was motoring through the hard-wood region of the Upper Peninsula. All morning we had wheeled through the fine forests aflame with color. The terra cotta of the roadbed blended into the buff of the beeches. Against the dark background of the pines flashed the scarlet and crimson and gold until our eyes fairly ached under the dazzling beauty of the constantly changing picture. The northland in October is incomparable.

Now we approached the thriving little city of Cedaro. Presently we stopped for the crossing lights at one of the main street intersections. A few feet from our car I saw a bare-headed man gazing at a fine large sign the workmen had just completed for a new building on the corner. He was evidently the owner. Something about his attitude reminded me of Casey. I glanced at the sign. The big gold letters spelled out "CASEY AND SON, MEATS AND PROVISIONS." I would see whether this grayhaired man was Casey of

the old days at Clio. Asking my companions to wait a moment I alighted and addressed him. It was Casey, the same smiling Casey, unchanged except for the white crown.

"Tell me, Judge, how did you come to spot me just passing through this way?"

"Well, Casey," I said, "I believe in signs, and nobody could miss that one of yours. I never knew you had left Clio. Tell me in a minute what has happened to you."

"It is not a long story," said Casey, "I have succeeded, that is all. I own this store and the building. We have been here four years. When Johnny – he was the oldest you remember – was twenty-one I took him into partnership. He has been marrit almost a year, and I don't mind tellin' you that it is already Grandpa and Grandma Casey. The rest of the childer are all alive and busy. The older ones are at work and the youngsters at school."

"This is all fine, Casey. Now I would like to ask you one question: To what do you attribute your success?"

"That's aisy," said Casey. "In the first place it is work, and that goes for all of us, especially Mrs. Casey. Second, payin' every debt when it comes due. You can break dom near all the com-

mandments and people will forgive and forgit; but the feller who doesn't pay his debts promptly is a goner. Third, treatin' customers right. And last, because we never spent more than we made."

"That is a good platform, Casey. You will continue to succeed. I suppose you will be getting one of those mansions down at the Point next."

"See here, Judge, I am no fool. I believe in climbing, but I will continue to climb the trees in my own yard. You know, Judge, a lot of people make monkeys of themselves trying to climb where they hain't no business to."

As I bade him good-bye I could not help wishing there were more Caseys in the world, and between you and me I feel quite sure there will be.

"RAINY," THE EDUCATED FISH

It never would have happened except for Harve. We were on the way back from the Big Sturgeon. The basket was full of trout, that is, Harve's was, and it included the one little speckled fool that happened to get on my hook. I am not a fisherman and I am not sure that I am not proud of it. But this day was one of my very infrequent lapses. Some do it one way, some another. I have known men to get drunk, or to go to church, or to indulge in what was to them some other sort of irregularity, without any real taste for it or any experience of real enjoyment. To me fishing is at the best a cold-blooded proposition. I would rather catch one human sucker than a whole barrel of fish. The game is less one-sided. When I say "poor fish" I mean it. The lot of a fish is a most undesirable one. With an absolutely perfunctory genesis, unseasoned by passion or prompted by pride of progeny, denied all comforts of home and maternal love, the life of a fish is one long streak of fear and fright and

flight until, humanlike, hunger forces him to take his chance and he is pierced by the hidden hook. With Harve, fishing is a different proposition. If they can't fish in heaven Harve would rather go to hell. He always gets them. I was curious to know his secret, so I said, "You can trust me, for this is positively my last offense as a fisherman. My experience with you is the usual one. When you take a fellow fishing you catch all the fish. How do you do it?"

"Well," said he, "you are about the only feller up here that I would trust with a secret, but you've always told the truth, so here goes: Just one word tells the story and that word is 'bacon.' "

"What do you mean?" I inquired.

"Now mebbe you don't know it, but fish is worse than a hound dog on smells. Once git a sniff of bacon up the wet nose of one of them big fellers and he goes clean crazy. He fergits all he ever knowed. Now, I always carry a piece of bacon rind and touch up my bait and line with it – jest a touch is enough – and if it gits close enough fer him to smell it, he's mine fer he just can't let it alone. You know some fellers spit on their bait, and sometimes that seems to work. If it does, you can bet your eye they've been

eatin' bacon. A feller in a querium down east told me onct you can tame a wild fish with bacon if you are only pashient. Don't see why fish can't be trained. Look what they do with seals. Some of them are such good ketchers that Landis could probably get 'em into a league game if they could get some rabbit to run for 'em. I'll betche if I had time, with bacon I could tame any old thing with fins and tail."

"Is that why they always serve shad roe with bacon, Harve, sort of out of respect to the memory of the affinity?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "take it or leave it, it's no difference to me, but if you knew all I know, you wouldn't poke fun at this bacon stuff."

A few days after this conversation I was engaged in my favorite hard work at Burt Lake – that is, I was sitting on a great boulder on the shore in front of my cottage. I found myself musing on the sayings of Harve, the wise old guide. There was not a ripple on the broad blue cover through which the bed of white sand showed invitingly. Presently my eyes rested on a brilliant object in the water not fifteen feet from where I sat. I adjusted my glasses and soon found that it was a fine rainbow trout, at least a seven-pounder, I guessed, and later acquaintances

proved it to be a close estimate. My curiosity was aroused. What was he doing so close to shore? Why was he so apparently unafraid? I would await developments. Slowly he swam back and forth, evidently awaiting my next move.

With Harve's words still in mind I scented the solution: the trout smelled bacon! And thus it was. The yard man in cutting a piece of driftwood on the beach had greased his saw with a piece of bacon rind and had left it on my rock. There it was right at my side. Leaving it there, I carefully got off the boulder and retired a short distance where I could command the view of the fish's movements. Presently he swam up to the base of the boulder and would recede only when I approached. That settled the matter. The bacon was the solution.

Then I thought to try a further experiment. I went to the wood-house and got an old fishpole. I fastened to it an easily broken thread, at the end of which I tied a tiny bit of bacon. I then climbed back on the rock and suspended the bacon in front of mister trout. Snap! it was gone. I continued to feed that trout bacon for nearly an hour. By shortening the pole I gradually reduced the distance between us until it seemed I could almost reach out and touch him. Finally,

he turned suddenly and darted away. But the next day there he was again, and the next, and the next, and many a day thereafter. Often when the water was so muddy that I could not see him, yet would he locate the suspended morsel and come to the surface. He certainly took home the bacon with great regularity and apparent relish.

It was late in the season when I was forced to part company with "old Rainy," as we came to call him, notwithstanding that my wife said it sounded too much like Rainy might be a congressman or something instead of a trout.

When I returned in July, 1912, I was prompted to continue my experiments. For several days I looked in vain for old Rainy's return. I decided to start anew. Once more I put a bacon rind on the rock. The second day thereafter my efforts were rewarded, for sure enough there was old Rainy, a little larger, a little brighter, and just as daring and trustful as ever. Space compels me to omit many of the interesting details of the education of Rainy. Be it sufficient to say that I taught him first to jump out of the water for his dainty morsel, and gradually to jump out whenever I appeared on the rock with a pole. I got along swimmingly while the water remained clear. I found, however, I was losing much time

in the training of Rainy through not being able to locate him when the water was murky.

So my next step was to teach him to respond to touch, for he seemed absolutely impervious to all sounds. So I rigged up a contrivance somewhat like an old-fashioned churn dasher. The base was a circular plank about two feet in diameter. In this I bored a hole and inserted a handle about four feet long. Thus, from the rock I could tamp the surface of the water sufficiently that Rainy would feel the jar of the vibrations. These he soon learned to associate with me and more bacon. Finally, he seemed to get into the spirit of the game and to realize that we wanted him to jump regardless of immediate remuneration, and his performances were soon the wonder of the beach. Often for a dozen times in quick succession he would throw his beautiful body into the responsive sunlight and fairly flood our eyes with the rainbow hues. Nor did these unusual exhibitions go unrewarded. There never was a day all season long when we were without bacon. We gave to Rainy that greatest of all satisfactions – the assurance of full appreciation.

For four seasons Rainy contributed to the entertainment of our household and guests. But it was too good to last, and in the end proved to

be his undoing. It was one day in August, 1915, that Bishop Harbach's launch was moored at my dock. Rainy that day had been unusually sportive. He jumped over the dock, over the row boats, turned double somersaults in the air, and once leaped to my old seat on the boulder. It was thus in the fullness of the enjoyment of his finny life that we left him and retired to lunch. When we returned Rainy was nowhere to be seen. Nor could he be aroused. Certainly no one would willingly have deprived us of the pleasure we derived from Rainy's performances. Certainly no hard-hearted fisherman could have been tempted to add dear old Rainy to his list of conquests! A little later we found him – dead – in the Bishop's launch. Rainy had evidently tried to jump over it but had miscalculated its width and had fallen into the boat, where he became entangled under the camp chairs and breathed his last.

His lovely body was not to be profaned. We tried to give him the honors of a decent funeral. We tied a stone to him, rowed out into deep water, and threw him overboard. Peace to his bones.

BOBBIE

In his wheel-chair at the side of a clump of syringas that adorned the spacious grounds of the Rockwell home little Bobbie lay fast asleep. On one side of the grounds the ripples of a turquoise lake danced under the June day sun. On the other side the thickly crowned hills swarming with songsters met the sloping sward. Between the two ran the broad highway from which a graveled drive led to the garage in the rear. The grounds were dotted with elms and poplars and maples and buckeyes. Shrubs and inviting flowers in pleasing designs satisfied the eye. It was a place of marked beauty.

From the topmost branch of a nearby poplar "old Reddy," as Bobbie called his much loved cardinal, cried out his "Wet year! wet year! wet year! wet year!" About the cradle nest on a swinging branch of an elm a constantly recurring flash of orange announced that Father was vigilant and that Mother oriole within was observing the busy season. In the ravines of the nearby hills thrushes and mocking birds were vieing with

each other in song. About the wheel-chair hopped the robbins and sparrows and catbirds, pecking at the empty paper sack at the side, scanning the turf for some stray seed. In Bobbie's little white hand was an English walnut being saved for Grayson, a favorite squirrel. The late-comer discovered it, deftly extracted it from the sleeper's grasp, and whisking his gray tail in the sleeping boy's face, scampered into the bushes with the tidbit. Gertrude Rockwell, the mother, as was her wont, brought a light chair, her needlework and book to sit at Bobbie's side. As she approached she saw that the silken brown curtains were tight over the big blue eyes, so quietly she sat and waited.

Eight years before there had been great joy in the Rockwell home, when after a hiatus of ten years Robert Junior arrived. Jean and John were already ten and twelve years old respectively. The birth of the new baby was indeed an important event. The doctor pronounced him perfect. He was strong, healthy, well formed. At two years of age he was a picture of baby loveliness. Then the awful thing happened. The nursemaid with the smiling, chubby, pink and white Bobbie in her arms tripped on the stairway and dropped him to the floor below. Reluctantly the doctor

told the parents the terrible truth, that there was no hope, that Bobbie would never walk, but was doomed for life to an invalid chair. So it was that as the years rolled by Robert and Gertrude lavished their love on the crippled boy. There was no sacrifice too great if it would in the slightest degree contribute to his comfort. He was unusually bright. He had learned to read at four. He had showered on him everything in the way of books and pictures and usable toys that were at all adaptable. Fairy tales, hero stories, the whole gamut of child interest was his unasked. And so it was that at the age of eight as a result of his imprisonment he was mentally an unusual child. His imagination was fired and his mind was full of the mysteries of life. His mother called him her Little Question Mark.

Still Bobbie slept, nor was it any wonder. The gentle, soothing air of this wondrous June morning, the droning of the insects in the nearby woods, the air heavily redolent with the fragrance of the June blossoms were far from wakeful in their effects. Bobbie slept. John and Jean were going to a picnic. At the entrance to the grounds Jean awaited with well filled baskets as John slowly backed the big car down the drive. As it passed the clump of shrubbery where Bobbie

lay, the noise of the car awakened him. Suddenly the blue eyes opened, as blue as the great canopy into which he steadily gazed, but he turned not his head, and was unaware of his mother's presence until she spoke.

"Well, is my precious boy back from Dreamland?"

"I did dream, Mother. I dreamed I was riding an elephant on the top of a cloud, and when I awoke there right above me was the cloud and the elephant on it too. Look, you can see it yet. And there is a lion. See him open his mouth, and see the big castle away back at the edge. I wish I were on the elephant's back. I'd like to see what clouds look like when you are close to them. Mother, what makes the sky blue?"

"There you go, Little Question Mark. Sometimes your questions are hard to answer. I guess it isn't blue really, but we can see so far that it just looks blue. You know sometimes the lake looks green, but the water isn't green; it is just the way the sunlight falls on it."

"How high is the sky, Mother?"

"No one knows just how high it is. We know one can't go very far up, for the air gets so thin one can't breathe. Even on the top of high mountains some people breathe with difficulty."

"Maybe God made it that way so people can't get at him. Just where is God, Mother?"

"He is everywhere. He is in the trees and the flowers and the green grass and in the songs of the birds and in everything that lives."

"Did God ever talk to you?"

"Not in just the way you talk, but I hear him very often. Some day you will know what the good, gray poet meant when he said, 'I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is signed by God's name.' Not letters of course such as the postman brings; maybe he meant he could read in the faces and in the acts of people the goodness of God."

"Tell me, Mother, is God always good?"

"Yes, Dearie, I think he is."

"Do you think he was good when he made me so I could never run or ride or play games?"

This was more than Gertrude could stand. She knew that question was too difficult for her or for any one to answer unerringly. She arose, bent over the crippled form and smothered the boy with long-drawn kisses. She wiped from his white face the tears, her tears, then replied,

"Oh I think, Bobbie, my darling, he must have been good; for he has made me love you, oh so hard, better than anything else in the whole

world. There are many things that you can not do, yet you do many things the others do not. You will not understand all that this means until you grow old, but you are storing your mind with real riches. I love Jean and John, but they read little, think less, and are so full of jazz and movies and autos that I fear when they are old they will be very poor. You will be rich, for you will have many things worth while about which to think."

"What is jazz, Mother?"

"It is a loud, jerky music that one hears at dances and eating places chiefly. Some one said it was four parts noise to one part music. It is very unlike the beautiful tunes that your Uncle Scott plays for you on his violin."

"What is old, and how does it feel to get that way?" queried Bobbie.

"I think it depends on how one has lived. If one has been useful, cheerful, full of love, and friendly, maybe he doesn't know when he is growing old."

"Are old people always hairy and wrinkled and cross like old Jim, the gardener?"

"No, Dearie, if they have been loved and were good when young they grow more interesting

with age. I fear old Jim had a hard life when he was young."

"Is papa a good man?"

"Certainly, Sweetheart, your father is a very good man. Why do you ask that?"

"Because if he is, what makes him go deer hunting? Uncle Scott told me that no man who had looked into the eyes of a dying deer could ever look at himself in a glass. I don't see why people want to kill animals unless they are needed for food, or because the animals might do one harm. Gee! I don't know what I should do if any one ever shot old Reddy, or my squirrels. I wish Papa wouldn't go deer hunting."

"They say, Bobbie, that there is something in a hunter's blood that goes away back to the time when all men were savages; and people who kill for the fun of killing have never outgrown that instinct. As for your father, have no fears. He will never hunt again after I tell him what you said. He wouldn't hurt your feelings for all the deer in the world. I am very happy that all our birds and animals know you are their friend."

"Oh, Mother, that makes me think. Do you know old Reddy sang 'whippoorwill' again this morning? I think he must have laughed, for he

said it so long and so plainly that a real whippoorwill came down from the woods and sat in the tree near him."

"How did you know it was a whippoorwill?"

"Because it looked just like the whippoorwill picture in the bird book, and because of the way he sat on the limb. Uncle Scott told me that a whippoorwill never sits crosswise of a limb but always lengthwise, and that's the way he sat."

"I never knew that, and I never heard that a cardinal imitated any other bird."

"Uncle Scott told me that he knew one once that did, and he wrote a Mr. Burroughs who knew more about birds than anybody, all about it. Anyway old Reddy does it, and I think he does it just for fun. Reddy isn't a bit afraid of me anymore. He very often comes to breakfast with me when I feed the robins on the lawn."

"No creature, Bobbie, would ever be afraid of you. They soon learn whom they can trust."

"I'm afraid I can't trust Mr. Grayson any more. When I fell asleep I had one walnut left, and when I awoke it was gone. I just know that old squirrel sneaked it out of my hand. He is always climbing over me."

Thus ran the chatter for an hour, then the mother pushed the wheel chair into the deep

shade and at Bobbie's request read to him stories of long ago. Again his senses succumbed to the caresses of the June morn. Bobbie was fast asleep.

Two years later another seductive summer morn found Bobbie again observing his daily program with his friends of the trees and shrubs. The birds, tamer than ever, alighted on his chair, ate from his hands. It was his birthday, and all the household were in high spirits. One of Bobbie's presents was a wonderful new chair. It was equipped so that he could propel it himself, and he was delighted to know that unaided he could now come and go at will. He had made the tour of the grounds and had come to rest at a thick clump of lilacs that bordered the garage driveway. Here was a sparrow's nest which he had observed from its beginning. Daily he inspected it, measuring the growth of the little occupants, now almost ready for departure. As he leaned over for a closer view his hand slipped from the control of the carriage and it quickly rolled into the driveway directly in front of a huge car that was just turning the shrubbery-hidden curve. The wheels of the car fairly burned as the emergency brake brought it to a sudden stop within a fraction of an inch of the chair bearing its precious load.

It was a long time before the driver, Frances Adams, fully recovered from the shock. She had motored many miles from her Cincinnati home to surprise her close, old-time friend, Mrs. Rockwell, on Bobbie's birthday, and only a kind fate had enabled her to avert a sickening tragedy. Frances Adams was a woman of great wealth, and childless. Possibly that was why she so loved children. At any rate she was noted for her kindly interest in all public welfare movements in which children were involved, and was famed for her benevolences. She realized, as did few of Gertrude's friends, what Bobbie meant to the mother, and how closely their lives were intertwined. This day that came so nearly being one of intense grief was turned into one of communion, of great thankfulness and joy. Frances had not seen Bobbie for three years, and she marveled at his mental development and his sweetness of spirit.

. . . . .

Once more it was June, and again the birthday of Robert Rockwell, Junior. Twenty years had wheeled into the past. The young man was still little Bobbie to his rapidly aging worshipful parents; but in the field of letters it was Robert Rockwell, who at thirty had achieved notable distinction. At twenty-four his life had burned

its prison walls and poured forth floods of sunshine in a series of children's books. His *Letters to Little Children* were syndicated and broadcast through the press into thousands of homes. His *Autobiography of a Kentucky Cardinal*, a plea for bird preservation, won a $10,000 prize in an Audubon Society contest. His latest book, *Meditations of A Shut-in*, had run through numerous printings. In short, the dream of Gertrude Rockwell had come true – "Bobbie" was famous.

It remained however for Frances Adams now to add the crowning glory to his success. The postman brought young Rockwell this birthday letter:

Cincinnati, June 9, 1927

My dear "Bobbie,"

Tomorrow will be your birthday. I must now tell you how deeply I fell in love with you that other birthday, twenty years ago, when a great catastrophe so closely passed our way. Then it was I first looked into your soul and knew intuitively great things were in store for you. I have followed and gloried in your achievements. You can thoroughly appreciate what Whitman meant when he said, "Love is to the lover and comes back most to him."

Now I propose a partnership. I want to share in your profits. Quietly I have come into possession of those nearby wooded hills, the

home of your boyhood friends. I have arranged to build there, to equip, and to fully endow a Home for Crippled Children. There is only one condition, namely that during your life time it shall be under your sole supervision and control, so that many may have the blessed privilege of personal contact with a real savior.

Yours affectionately,

FRANCES ADAMS

Smiling through tears of joy, Robert handed the letter to his gray-haired mother to read. Then she bent over him and once more smothered him with kisses, just as she had that morning among the flowers long ago, when Bobbie asked what was for her the hardest question in the world.

A MAIN STREET EPISODE

Paint Valley was a beautiful little Iowa town of five thousand people. It adorned the banks of Paint Creek, thus named in the old Indian days because of the brilliant colors that marked the cliff through which the stream had worn its way.

Nature had been kind to Paint Valley. There were great elms and maples and rolling hills dotted with cozy cottages. It was a real oasis in the monotonous prairie stretching out in all directions.

In one of these homes lived Reverend Arlington, portly, bewhiskered, imposing. His was a contradictory nature. He had a sense of the beautiful and loved the flowers, the purling stream, and the great trees. After the summer's shower reverently and soulfully he would stand and gaze into the fireplace of the heavens where the reds and golds and purples of the western clouds played in fleeting splendor and faded into dusk, and often he would take by the hand little Helen, the granddaughter, and lead her among the hollyhocks and sunflowers, and wistarias, and

talk to her of the birds and the flowers and the trees and the clouds. She used to say the sunflowers nodded to her over the fence that lined the walks, and that the lilacs and roses whispered to her when she held her ear close to them, and the minister would tell her she was a little flower and must always be pure and beautiful and learn to do beautiful things.

But Reverend Arlington was not all poetry. At times he was not even blank verse, but cold, stolid prose. He was first of all a religionist, bigoted, overbearing, prejudiced and unforgiving. It was with reluctance that he consented to the marriage of his daughter Jane to "Billy" Westcott, the good fellow, the popular, successful druggist of the village; for the store was kept open Sundays, and there was always the lurking danger of traffic in intoxicants, but Jane, the daughter, explained that she could still stay with her father and care for him in his rapidly advancing age, and so it was arranged for her to bring Billy into the common home where he would be under the benign influence of the father, and she assured him that time would bring them closer together.

For a year or two things ran along fairly well, when Helen came and added a new interest. It

was obvious, though, that contentment could not permanently abide in a household so temperamentally different. Affairs drifted along, sometimes better, sometimes worse, but it was plain to be seen that the only bond of unity was the little Helen, now a child of seven.

Jane Arlington was an average young woman when she married James Westcott, who was commonly known as "Billy." She was good looking, capable, and rather interesting, but to a certain degree inherited her father's prejudices and consistently reflected the narrowness that was his chief characteristic.

One day it came to the ears of Reverend Arlington that liquor was being purchased in his son-in-law's drugstore. A scene ensued. Westcott's explanations were rejected. The wife sided with the father. There followed long series of dead days in which silence was more penetrating than words. Monotony marked Westcott's existence. He sat behind his newspaper while father and daughter discussed the doings of the W.C.T.U. and the next revival. Westcott knew that his declining business was the result of their combined effort to make his store unpopular with the conservators of the community morals. He wept in silence as he listened to the prattle of

little Helen, for he knew that the parting of the ways was not far distant. It semed impossible to leave the little daughter, the only ray of sunshine in the unfortunate household, but he knew there was no alternative – he must go.

One day he stole to the school and took little Helen with him to have her picture taken so that in the long days to come he could gaze upon his little Sunshine and dream of what might have been. Life would not be entirely empty with the memory of little Helen, and through the years he could gaze upon those features and say, "At least I was her father."

The divorce and the sale of the business followed. Westcott insisted in providing for the education of little Helen, and regretfully but firmly sought new fields.

Reverend Arlington continued to "fill pulpits" for various preachers in the near-by region, and Jane used her wits and hands to contribute to the family support. Be it said to the credit of Reverend Arlington, he loved Helen, and early discovered her bent, for it was always pictures that she wanted. He it was who first showed her how it was easy to manipulate circles and make a picture of a cat and various other objects to contribute to her amusement. Sometimes she would

coax her grandfather to make boats for her, and he would take a pencil and draw four lines on a board and get their saw and make little boats, and they would float them in a tub of water that stood below the pipe from the eaves of the house where they caught the rain, and little Helen would say, "When I get big I will saw and paint and make ships for my children." And one time as the old gentleman dozed in his chair little Helen sat on her chair and drew a picture, and it was so like him that the mother wondered. She had a vision of what might have been had she been wiser and a fond father might have given little Helen a real opportunity for development.

And so it came that they gave little Helen what they could in the way of the education that the community offered. At seventeen she was the sweet girl graduate. Her solo was a feature of the "exercises," and in the "Art Display" Helen's pictures were pronounced by all the local judges to be the very best.

In less than a year the old grandfather passed, we hope, to the place of his earthly dreams, and shortly after Jane too received the final call. Little Helen, under twenty, talented in embryo, was left alone in the big, bad world, dependent upon her own resources. Of course she could teach if

she had the opportunity, but in the meantime she must live. Following the example of some acquaintances she sought the city. She knew people in Chicago, and had not her grandfather told her of the wonderful Chicago Y.W.C.A., and wouldn't they there soon show her the way to success? She packed her few belongings, took a last look at her old home, and started for Chicago. Arriving, a policeman directed her to the Y.W.C.A. Scarcely settled in her room, she scanned the papers to find something that she could do. There was an ad for clerical work in the office of the brokers of some enterprise she did not understand, but early in the morning she was an applicant at Room 1408 in the great, tall building, which seemed to her to stretch almost to the skies. She was thankful to find that the work was something that she could do – the extremely interesting labor of addressing envelopes, but it was at least a "job," and she went home happy that in the morning she could report for duty.

At dinner the matron introduced her to a number of the guests, and through instinct she was not long in sizing up the various types. One who impressed her at once with kindliness deplored that she herself had no talent for drawing,

for just now a friend needed an extra to aid in the making of Christmas cards and table favors. Helen explained that that was exactly what she could do, and the young lady promised to intercede for her. However, she reported for work at 1408 Skyward Building and worked rapidly and deftly. She "looked good" to the bill clerk next whose desk she worked, and before the second day had passed he created an opportunity to speak to her. He surely was a nice young man and there was no harm in allowing him to walk with her to the avenue, but the nice young man proceeded too rapidly for his own good. She had been at work scarcely a week when he, making an excuse to pause at a dingy doorway inside the avenue, tried to draw her inside the door. Instantly she sensed danger. She turned and ran, nor did she stop until she reached the Y.W. home. It was a source of great joy when her friend, Mrs. S., anounced that she had secured for Helen the position she discussed, for she feared to go back to the Skyward Building and meet again the cause of her fright.

In the new position for several weeks she toyed at making Christmas novelties, for this sort of work was more a pleasure than labor, but it was only temporary, and meantime an employment

agency directed her to a position as teacher of drawing and music in the public schools of Rockton, Indiana, a village of a few thousand inhabitants, and in September we find her located with other teachers as partners.

Pretty girls with good voices were not so abundant in Rockton that the choir master would wait until the second Sunday to enlist the new music teacher, so she made her debut under favorable circumstances.

So also the handsome young man in the corner drugstore had not waited long to find out who his fair new customer was, and the bookkeeper in the lumber office that she passed on the way to school the first morning was glad she dropped her books and that he was there to pick them up and direct her the way to school.

The autumn sped away and Helen was easily the most popular teacher of the town.

Once she bought some cards at the corner drugstore and Adams, the handsome but rather bashful clerk, slipped into the package an extra card which read: "I wish to call on you next Sunday afternoon," and he did call, and many times after that, and the days and nights that followed found them very often in each other's company. Mr. Adams began to think seriously

that there was but one proper closing ceremony to all this affair, and Helen, too, had begun to think that possibly she was destined before long to become accustomed to a new name. Then something happened.

At the village boarding house where Mr. Adams lived there was another young man named Graves. He was the bookkeeper who had so promptly picked up her books the first morning of her life at Rockton. She remembered how graciously he assisted her and directed her to the school a short distance away. Graves had the reputation at the boarding house of being unreliable and sporty, but he was suave of manner and not unattractive to the music teacher who had not had any remarkable discriminating experiences with young men, so though not positively encouraging his attentions yet she had never repulsed him.

The party at the home of the Milners was an event in the village. It was evident to even the least discerning that Mr. Adams and the pretty music teacher were getting along fairly well. Partners for dinner were chosen by shooting at a diminutive target bearing the names of the ladies, and when Mr. Adams deftly picked off the card bearing Helen's name all were pleased except

a certain young man named Graves. He had been studiously attentive to Helen of late, not that he cared primarily for her more than any other girl, but that he prided himself for his strength with the ladies and of always beating Adams to it, so he had determined at whatever cost to himself before he faded from Rockton for all time to humble Adams. Now it transpired that only a day or two before this event his employers had discovered irregularity in his accounts; indeed, it was a question whether he was not criminally liable, but his employers told him that if he would make good and leave the town the matter would be dropped. He had asked for a few days' time in which to make the necessary financial adjustment. There yet remained one day before the village would know that he had been dismissed from his business. He determined he would make the best of that day. He managed to get a dance with Helen and engaged her for a stroll the following evening.

It was almost dark when they returned from a long walk through the woods that skirted the river. He had carefully planned the walk so as to pass by the office where for three years he had worked. He stopped a moment saying that he must get some papers that he had forgotten, and

feigned to unlock the door. "I have the wrong key," said he. "Let us take the short cut through the lumber yard and I will leave you at your home and come back." Helen did not know that he had made this feint merely to allow two men to pass – one the village marshal and his companion, a member of the school board. Unwittingly she joined him and they started the short way through the lumber yard. The high piles of lumber that lined the main passage-way shut the light from the somewhat distant village tower. As they turned into the side way that led to the street he seized her and pulled her down on a low pile of boards at the side of the alley. Instantly she sensed danger. She tried to scream, but fright made her dumb. Summoning all her strength she tore away and ran – she knew not where, only to escape. Hastily she ran through one of the passage ways and found herself face to face with the two men who had passed when Graves was fumbling with the door of the office. Their suspicions had been aroused and they had followed the couple at a safe distance, but Helen did not stop for them. She ran and ran to her little home, shut herself in her room, and cried herself to sleep.

As the eight o'clock freight pulled out a form

swung on to the caboose. Graves knew it was time to go.

The next day Helen went to her work as usual, saddened, but thankful that she had escaped the clutches of this unprincipled rascal. That afternoon there was some lack of the usual attention in her classes. The second day children pointed at her as she passed through the school yard where they were playing, and once she distinctly heard "lumber yard." At four o'clock there was a note on her desk which read: "You will be present at eight o'clock at a called meeting of the board at which all members and their wives will be present, also the town marshal." Signed, J. H. Robbins, Principal.

Dazed, unconscious of any intended wrong doing, she went to the meeting. The three trustees and their wives were there and also the town marshal. He didn't frighten her, but as she looked into the faces of these three women she knew that she had come to receive her death warrant. The proceedings were brief. President Jones spoke: "Miss Arlington, your resignation has been written out. Please sign it here." Her hand trembled as she hastily wrote her name. Then she turned as if to speak, looked for a moment into the faces of her accusers, and silently passed out

into the darkness. There was yet an hour until the scheduled time for the Chicago train. She hastily packed her few belongings and left Rockton, the wives of the board members, the cruel gossips, the town marshal and – Mr. Adams!

Again she sought her one haven of rest, the Y.W.C.A. The first day she answered an advertisement and at once got employment in a dentist's office. The dentist was young, fine looking, and married, but at the end of a fortnight once more there came to Helen the cold fact that loss of position again stared her in the face, or loss of self-respect. She chose the former and again was on the eternal search which marks the careers of most country girls in a great city. She went back to the job where she had worked on the Christmas cards. Miss J. was out but was expected in soon. Would she not wait? Some one else was also waiting. Helen knew at once that the lady was a woman of some station in life, for she had class and charm of manner and culture. The lady was attracted by Helen's honest and pretty face and made some passing remark. Conversation ensued. It transpired that the lady was interested in art and she talked as one who knew of artists and their work. Helen told her that she had been led to believe that she herself was not without

talent but that circumstances had prevented her following her bent. She also told the lady of her recent experience and how now she was seeking some employment where she could be safe and happy in honest work. "It is fortunate, little girl, that we met," remarked the lady. She took a card from her case and on the card she wrote: "This young woman recommended by Mrs. Fletcher." "Present that at Room 609 Lyson Building and you can get temporary employment in some industrial art work if you are at all facile with the brush. Go tomorrow at one o'clock. They will be on the lookout for you." Needless to say the position was hers.

Now the summer swiftly passed. It was made clear that this was only a temporary position, but it was full of delight to Helen and she did her work to the entire satisfaction of her employer.

Meanwhile she consulted a teachers' agency and secured a position in a Montana town for work similar to that which she started so auspiciously in the Indiana village. November found her busy, appreciated, and contented. She was a natural teacher, and the associations of the summer had renewed her interest in the pastime of painting, and here for three years she lived and became a part of the life of the community. Her

associates stood in striking contrast to some of those that in her earlier experiences had dampened the ardor of youth and had planted in her mind an attitude of suspicion of all men.

Many were the happy hours she spent in Bluemont, with the children about her as she taught them to put upon the canvas the beauties of which nature was there so prolific. Yet always and always her mind went back to her childhood home and that picture grew and grew upon her. Ever did she remember the little cottage in Paint Valley with its wealth of old-fashioned flowers and its quiet contentment. She painted a picture and it pleased her. About this time she saw an announcement of the $500 prize contest for amateurs that was an annual event at the Minneapolis Art Institute. She resolved to repaint the picture and enter the contest, and when it was at last completed and sent forward she felt that she had more than an even chance to win.

One man in Rockton, Indiana, was gossip proof. It pained him that he had no means of locating the girl that had come into his life and of communicating to her his confidence. He was disgusted with the details repeated in his store and gladly accepted an opportunity that came to him to sell out his business and seek a location in the

west. He had been comfortably settled in Helena some time before he discovered that Helen was at Bluemont. It happened thus: One day his business called him there and at the news stand he noticed some attractive little paintings. The girl at the counter seeing his interest, remarked: "Those are beautiful, if they are a local product. We think we are very fortunate that Bluemont should own so talented a young lady as Miss Arlington." A question or two confirmed his suspicion that Miss Arlington was the young woman whom more than any one else in the world he had desired to meet. There was unfinished business to transact in her case and he would brook no delay. Sufficient to say, it was not long before it was decided that Helen must give up her work at the close of the term. They would go to Minneapolis for their honeymoon, incidentally attend the Art Exhibit, and then settle at Helena, where always the peace-giving mountains would look down upon their happiness.

When Billy Westcott left Paint Valley he determined never again to cast his lot in a small town. He arrived in Minneapolis at an opportune time. In a brief period he had been exceedingly successful in real estate projects and rapidly acquired a comfortable fortune. One of his ven-

tures was the establishing of drug stores in growing towns throughout the west, giving bright young clerks an interest in the business and opportunity eventually to become sole owners. Westcott had attained the sobriquet of "the millionaire druggist," and it was through him that young Adams had established himself in the business at Helena.

Westcott was somewhat of a connoisseur in art, and many beautiful pictures adorned his rich home. He was a patron of art exhibits and always took a keen interest in the annual contest for amateurs in the Minneapolis Institute, and thus it happened that as he was inspecting the exhibit his attention was arrested by an unusual picture which bore the mark of the judges as the winner of first prize. His keen eye detected this picture as a faithful reproduction of the old home at Paint Valley that had held for him so much of joy and of regret. A flood of memories swept over him as long he sat there gazing and wondering. He took from his pocket the old picture of little Helen that he had carried all the years and kissed it fondly, and as he sat presently between him and the prize picture there came a young man and woman apparently oblivious of all surroundings. "Oh, see!" she exclaimed, "I have won it, I

have won it!" For surely enough it bore the card, "First Award." She could not restrain her joy, and he, the evidently new and fond husband, was glad for her sake and for himself. The voice of the woman sounded strangely familiar to James Westcott. It carried him back to the old scenes which he had just been reviewing. Suddenly the mystery of the picture cleared. He understood. Approaching the fond couple he said to Mrs. Adams: "Pardon me, madam, but I am not sure that we may not be acquainted. Did you ever hear of James Westcott?" "No," replied Helen, "but Billy Westcott was my father. The divorce came when I was but a little child. My grandfather forbade the name of Westcott, and I grew up as Helen Arlington. This is my husband, Mr. Adams, of Helena."

"I scarcely need an introduction to Mr. Adams, although we have never met," said Westcott. "I think he knows James Westcott, but not by my nickname. And now Mr. Adams, look at this picture and tell me whether you have ever seen the subject before." He withdrew from his pocket the time-worn picture of little Helen. Adams looked at the miniature for a moment only and then exclaimed, "Helen – my Helen, your Helen! Surely it is a kind fate that has brought us to you

at this time and place." And then the long embrace and tears of joy.

Westcott's interest in the exhibit suddenly waned. He excused himself long enough only to find the manager and to leave a check for the prize picture and an order for its immediate delivery to his residence. He rushed his newly found children to his car and whizzed to his luxurious home. Soon all were gathered in the spacious drawing room where reminiscences and experiences vied with each other for position.

James Westcott was not long in announcing that plans for the future included the relinquishing of Helena affairs and a partnership for Mr. Adams in Westcott's large business.

Breaking through a rift in the leaden clouds that hid the western sky, the setting sun burst forth and flooded the room with gold. It was as if nature herself were joining in the song of happiness that through the years had been unsung but which now, at last, was their joint possession.

Arm in arm the three stood and watched the red sun fade as day dropped the gray curtain of dusk.

II.
SOME BITS OF VERSE

LOOKING BACKWARD

[*March eleventh, 1928*]

What shall the man at seventy say
To followers on the broad pathway?

Serene I stand upon the crest
That separates the East from West.
I am not weary, seek not rest;
Of all the days to-day is best.

From vantage point I view the throng
Of dusty travelers, weak and strong,
Elbowing, crowding, hurrying on
To reach a goal ere day be gone.

To all this message I proclaim:
Nor rank nor gold nor well-earned fame
Will much avail in darkness deep,
Nor help to make the path less steep.

The torch of love dispels the night,
The touch of love makes burdens light.
Look ever up, be stout of heart;
Of life awaits the choicest part.

What shall the man at seventy say
To followers on the broad pathway?

YOU ARE MY KIN

Nor time nor circumstance nor place
Can our relationship efface.
It matters not who gave you birth,
Nor at what mark you hold your worth,
You are my kin.

The towering peak, the shady glade,
And every creature God has made,
The flowers nodding in the breeze,
The voices of the whispering trees,
Proclaim us kin.

No need from me yourself to hold;
I have my brawn, you have your gold.
What portion, pray, of yellow wealth
Would you exchange for the good health
Of me, your kin?

Not station, rank, nor bluebook fame
Counts in the Roll that bears our name;
The common Father knows his sons,
And measures well the race each runs;
And we are kin.

May Sympathy between us stand,
And hold each fondly by the hand.

From love of self give each release,
And guide us into perfect peace;
For we are kin.

AT SIXTY-TWO

At sixty-two my skies are blue,
The softened sun hangs in the West,
And mellow light, sister of night,
Proclaims the waiting, certain rest.

When skies are blue for me and you,
It matters little near which end
Of Life's short road lies our abode,
If love and joy our way attend.

The skies are blue when friends are true,
When children's children sing your praise;
And at your feet lay memories sweet,
Replicas of your youthful days.

The skies are blue when those you knew
As comrades in the early days,
Still constant stand, a loyal band,
And know no parting of the ways.

WHITTLINGS

The skies are blue, could we see through,
Always, though clouds do intervene.
Dismiss all fears, suppress the tears,
For Time ere long will shift the scene.

At sixty-two my skies are blue;
You helped to make them so, my friend.
May you in kind, your own skies find
Serene and cloudless to the end.

A CHRISTMAS MISSIVE

Across the years,
Befraught with fears,
Bedewed with tears,
Yet more abounding in sweet joys,
To you, dear Friend,
My hand extend,
My message send,
For Love today my will employs.

In Life's dark maze
Divergent ways
And burdened days

Forced weary comrades far apart.
All ways will blend
Before the end;
Till then we send
Most gladsome greetings heart to heart.

Once glorious Spring,
Light on the wing,
To us did fling
The blithesome hours of radiant youth.
How well we fared!
Together shared,
Together dared –
Then Summer Sun and search for Truth.

Through finger tips
Or meeting lips
Love's current slips
And tells its tale when friends are near;
But far apart
Through space doth dart
From heart to heart
As Christmas hails th' approaching year.

Why should I chide,
My wish denied?
Fate is defied:

Though years are wedged twixt you and me,
No way so long
That Memory's song
Shall not sound strong,
And bear my message back to thee.

TO HENRY SABIN

[*On his eightieth birthday*]

'Tis good to tread so long the Open Road
Then halt a moment at the Bend
While comrades place anew of love a load
To carry till the Road shall end.

Through fourscore years the Wheel of Fate has turned;
Betimes the index seemed to rest
Where Error, Toil, or Grief deep scars had burned;
But you no doubt or fear oppressed.

You ever knew the Master could not err;
Unflinching walked and knew no fear.
Your vision clear no murky doubt could blur,
For Faith and hope were ever near.

SOME BITS OF VERSE

On this, the anniversary of your birth,
Your friends with joy recount the days
In which to school and state you gave your worth
And earned so well the meed of praise.

No greater good can come to man than this:
That Age shall gently on him rest;
And when Kind Nature gives the Parting Kiss
Shall merit "He hath done his best."

May many milestones down the Open Way
Await your passage, dearest friend;
May Comfort, Love and Peace attend this day
And constant bide until the end.

AT CATALINA

O Avalon, fair Avalon,
Bright jewel of the sea;
With much regret we travel on
And say Farewell to thee.

We know your charms; within your arms
The toiler finds sweet rest.
You know the range of pleasing change
And give to us your best.

The distant sail, the winding trail,
The diver's headlong leap,
The azure sky, the seal's loud cry,
The wonders of the deep.

The sun-browned steep, the canons deep,
The shaded wave-lapped cove,
The tropic flower, the perfumed bower,
Are reasons why we love.

Now day is done, and dropping sun
With gold adorns your crown,
And from the deep night scatters sleep
And pulls the curtains down.

At Avalon, still Avalon,
Lulled with the billows' swish,
We launch our boat for port remote
Where dreamland yields our wish.

New beauties rise as Eastern skies
Proclaim the day is born.
Again with zest, take up the quest,
Once more from worry turn.

Across the bay, San Pedro way,
Comes a commanding voice;
The call to work we may not shirk.
We go. We have no choice.

But Avalon, sweet Avalon,
We swear you have our heart,
So, dainty miss, we wave a kiss,
Reluctantly depart.

THE END OF THE ROAD

[*In memory of T. W. G.*]

The Open Road alike for all doth end.
  Denied all dalliance on the way,
Nor tears nor prayers may make the Guide extend
  The fixed time by one short day.

The ending of the Road an Inn doth mark.
  Within the Keeper constant stands
To signal travellers in the approaching dark,
  Receive the burdens from their hands.

And now our friend hath heard the Keeper's call.
  Within the Inn lays down his pack
Of hope and love and tears, life's trophies all;
  Nor all our prayers can call him back.

The secrets of the Inn are ne'er revealed,
  We only know insured is rest.

We may not know what glories are concealed,
  We trust that all is for the best.

What if beyond there lie uncharted seas?
  What if instead, another Road?
We think that in His eyes alike are these,
  That all paths lead to His abode.

When from the East engulfing, certain night
  Drives westward fast the bounteous day
Till glorious sun is lost to mortal sight
  And glittering sentries mark the way,

We know a zone of gold succeeds the black;
  Each night an earnest of new morn.
Shall He Who holds the planet in its track
  Subject the soul's fond wish to scorn?

To faithful friend we bid a fond good night.
  Whether awaits an endless sleep,
Whether resplendent morn shall greet the sight,
  He knows and will the secret keep.

'Tis good so calm to leave the Open Road,
  Fearless to hearken to the Call;
Ready to pay the Master's debt long owed,
  Worshipful at His feet to fall.

THE TORNADO

[*Easter, 1913*]

High in the sky and far from sea
Upon a field of cloud,
The furies held fierce revelry,
And shouted long and loud.

The lightnings are the furies' breath,
The thunders are their voice.
Their fiercest joy is dealing death,
In horror they rejoice.

Now roll they up a fearful thing
From cloud stuff all around –
A giant top with fiery string –
And spin it towards the ground.

With dreadful swirl along its path
On sped the demon toy.
Destruction was the aftermath;
The furies shrieked with joy.

It seemed a living, ravenous thing
Intent upon its prey;
With headlong plunge and fearful swing
It writhed along its way.

Now crouching low, now sailing high,
It leaps with hungry maw.
With deafening roar from out the sky
It grasps fair Omaha.

Then beauty paled and hearts were rent
In one brief moment's space.
The awful thing its fury spent;
Dire ruin marked the place.

Yet storm cloud fiends, nor flood, nor fire
Can utterly efface;
The living brave will but climb higher,
And ever upward face.

III.
PLAYDAY JOTTINGS

UP WHERE THE NORTH BEGINS

Where does the North begin? Physically, far from the dirt and din of cities. Where the white birches and cedars fringe the green-blue lakes, where the aroma of the pines soothes the sense, where unfailingly the clean cooling breeze marks the advent of night, where ice-cold springs gush at your feet, where the fair face of nature is not wholly disfigured with man-made scars, where wild life is not yet extinct, where autumn is ushered in with chariots of scarlet and gold, where for six long months old winter stands guard in his icy garments – that is where the north begins.

But the real northland cannot be located in terms of latitude and longitude, for it is a state of mind, not a physical tract. It is the power to employ for recreative purposes the unusual elements offered by this rare geographical region. There is therefore no true northland except to the true vacationist. What one gets out of the northland depends wholly on what he takes to it. To the nature lover it means one thing, to the

sportsman, another; but to the average bawling, brainless, noisy, surging, crowd-seeking creature on vacation it means nothing but another place to do what he does at home. He finds it cooler, so he is able to follow his pursuits even more vigorously than is his custom, but he sees nothing, feels less, and returns as barren hearted as he came.

I am convinced that vacation times offer unusual opportunities for taking soul measures. The way one reacts to his vacation may be taken as a fairly safe guide to the measure of his limitations. Yesterday I talked with a motorist who boasted he had "made" five hundred miles the first day out and, barring bad luck, he expected to "cover" the entire northland in four days more. "There are some beautiful spots between Chicago and Mackinac," I ventured to remark. "Yes, I guess so," he replied, "but we didn't stop much except to eat. Guess we did pass a good many lakes." Here was a type. All he needed was gasoline and beefsteak to satisfy his soul, and his name is legion.

On the other hand, to the lover of the great outdoors, to one who wishes to convert his playtime into utter forgetfulness of work and worry, to him whose soul is attuned to the harmonies of

Where the North Begins

nature, to him who regards vacation as a time for recreating his lagging powers and desires, there is a northland of rare charm and attractiveness. It is the ideal place for the real vacationist.

Where the long trail winds through the wispering pines
And the birds in summer go –
Where the brook trout leap in the riffles deep
And the cool, sweet breezes blow,
Where the Indian canoe shoots the rapids through
In chase of the deer and bear –
Where the partridge drums as his shy mate comes –
The North begins right there.

Where the creek and rill their waters spill
As they rush to the silvery lake,
Where the honking geese with their young, in peace
Midst the rice in the rustling brake,
Where the bull moose call in the early fall
Rings out on the frosty air,
Where the wigwam's seen 'neath the hemlock green –
The North begins right there.

Where the summer's sun melts the snows that run
Through this earthly paradise,
Where a man's a man if he can stand
'Gainst the winter's snow and ice,
Where the marts of trade from the mill will fade
As you breathe the fresh pure air,
And you tensely thrill to the Master's will,
The North begins right there.

C. F. WHITESHIELD

ALONE IN THE WOODS

To-day I sit alone in the heart of the woods. There is naught to disturb my meditation other than the drum of a partridge, the hum of a distant motor boat, or the uneasy call of a sentinel crow sounding the warning of intrusion. Here I sit secluded, far beyond the reach of radios, clanging bells, crossing whistles, honking horns, and incessant gabble.

I am alone so far as human companionship goes, and I am glad. I pity the man who is denied the solaces of solitude, who has never learned to loaf and invite his soul, who lacks the desire or power of communion with nature.

I say I am alone, and yet I am not. From a high crotch a black squirrel eyes me suspiciously. A sap-sucker busy above me scatters bark dust over my open book. A chipmunk frisks, he thinks, dangerously near my feet. Sounds there are, too, a-plenty, but they are the gentle, soothing songs of the woods. I hear the flutter of leaves in the topmost branches of the tall, straight trees as the early autumn wind mildly measures their

tenacity. I hear the voices of the huge hemlocks, the towering sugar maples, and the gnarled beeches. They tell me of the ruthless slaughter of their neighbors, the great pines, and how their own limbs were torn and broken as the giants of the forest fell among them. All about me is stretched the great brown carpet with its woof of leaves and warp of snows and rains, and it tells a tale centuries old. To-day it lies like a huge leopard's skin, its velvety surface flecked with yellow spots as the sunshine filters through the leafy canopy.

The darkness and dankness of the dense woods are delightfully quieting. My heart goes out in thankfulness for the precious gift of trees. Long I sit and wonder, and depart refreshed in body and soul, for here one's musings lead straight towards the path of the peace that passeth understanding, and towards the riches that moth cannot corrupt nor thieves break through and steal.

It is late afternoon, and all too soon the cathedral doors will close and black silence efface my fond retreat. I must go.

BEING HAPPY

I am aware that there are many people who deny that there is really such a thing as a state of contentment. These argue that one who claims to be contented is either a liar or has succeeded in hypnotizing himself. It seems to me that these Thomases are made up of two groups: those who are careless in their use of terms, and those who are temperamentally incapable of breaking through an encasement of selfish desire. The first group declare that, even though a state of contentment were possible of attainment, it would be undesirable, for it would dwarf ambition and curb progress. It is obvious that these confuse contentment with complacency. One who arrives at a state of content may have many ungratified desires, but he is not thereby disturbed or disquieted. He accepts things as they are. He is in harmony with the universal scheme, and not fretted because he cannot understand it all. There is none of us who might not have a desire to live a life devoid of pain and grief, but this is not possible. One can never arrive at a state

of content unless he has acquired the self-mastery to adapt himself unflinchingly and uncomplainingly to inevitable conditions. If his philosophy of life does not exclude dissatisfaction, and doubt, and rebellion, he must be content with discontent.

It does not follow that because one proclaims himself as contented that his ambitions have aborted or that he is no longer moved by laudable desires. Complacency is nothing more or less than a state of self satisfaction. That may be a dangerous state. Contentment is not.

It seems to me that contentment is the foundation of true happiness. One may experience a temporary enjoyment through some satisfying act, but a lasting happiness must be rooted in a sustaining philosophy of life.

As I write these words I look out upon a beautiful lake whose ever-changing hues delight the eye. All about me are birds and flowers and lovely trees. My ears are filled with the voices of care-free children. I am surrounded by loving friends and cultured, unselfish neighbors. There is everything in the way of food and drink and play and rest to make me comfortable. This environment makes happiness more easily attainable; but the indispensable factor after all is lack-

ing. It lies within one's self. Unless one has a controlling desire to contribute to the comfort of others; unless one really thinks more of others than oneself, no amount of pleasing environment can make one truly happy. Selfishness is the root of unhappiness.

And so I do not wonder that those whose chief objective in life is the satisfying of selfish desires cannot understand the meaning of contentment. It matters little what direction the desire takes. It may be the mania of accumulating things, a wish to outshine one's neighbors, a spirit of domination in home and community, an effort to appear more learned or cultured than associates, or what not. If its foundation is selfishness, the follower has already enrolled in the army of the discontented, and happiness will come to him only in occasional spots.

A TRAGEDY

Does it shock you that in the supposedly peaceful regions of northern Michigan, within a dozen miles of Bay View noted for piety plus, the strong men of one comunity would be permitted to descend upon an adjacent peaceful people, drive away or kill the populace, pillage the homes, and carry off the offspring? Yet this is exactly what happened, and so far as I know nothing has been done about it. No one knows how the expedition came to be organized, what preliminaries preceded the attack. Apparently it did not differ materially from any other war. The motives were the same and it was carried out with that orderly precision that usually characterizes military invasion.

Here are the details: One morning, across the Belgium of the walk that leads to the rear door of my house at Burt Lake, I discovered a column of large, reddish-brown ants, traveling in a straight line northward. I followed them to their destination, which was the base of an old apple tree about thirty feet away. Around this were

several ant hills, occupied by a different species of ant. As I saw nothing unusual about this, I proceeded about my business, but on returning an hour later I found an entirely new situation. Hundreds of these orderly ants of an hour before were now scurrying in the opposite direction, tumbling over each other and the various obstructions in their path. Each, except those who appeared to be officers (whose business it is in antdom, as elsewhere, to see that George does the work), was carrying back the trophies of war. Hundreds bore in their jaws eggs of various sizes. Some carried young ants and others products that were undoubtedly especially valuable tidbits. No matter that in their haste they tumbled headlong over twigs, pebbles, and other obstructions; not once did I see one of these laborers release the vice-like grip of his jaws, though the burden often seemed almost as large as the carrier. I followed the line of travel clear across my yard and far into the long grass of the adjoining lot to a huge ant hill, the home of the despoilers. I returned to the devastated area to find only an occasional straggler running hither and thither, apparently dazed at the results. The destruction had been complete.

An interested guest directed me to the authori-

ties and I soon found that I had witnessed no uncommon occurrence. This was an ant method of solving labor shortage. These foreign captives, the specialist tells me, are made slaves. In ant government the various lines of activities seem to be well defined and differentiated. It is evident that some ants are born bosses or else they have a system of education which produces bosses.

The ant is so distinctly human that his performances puzzle me. This could have been no spontaneous outbreak; the homes of the two colonies, measured in ant miles, were far distant. How was the rival colony located? How was the information as to its wealth and strength relayed to the authorities? What sort of councils preceded the invasion? What language was used? Was it a volunteer or a conscription army? Was the attack justified? And away back of it all, who invented war?

TRACKS

I caught Spring a napping this year in my early visit to the land of the straits. I appreciated the predicament of the old fellow in the Upper Peninsula who observed that the seasons had a way of their own up there, because "It can't get warm until the ice goes out, and the ice can't go out until it gets warm." It was already the first of May; the double miracle had just been performed, and I saw the north country in the nude. The tombstone birches spotted the gray and green graveyards of the woods where old winter had been interred. Not a leaf yet to be seen. The woods have no secrets now. Every log and bog and fallen tree stands forth in bold relief. Sluggish black streams creep towards the nearby lakes. Except that here and there was a stray robin or a martin there was no promise that Spring was on her way. It was a bleak and barren picture. Yet in an incredibly short time it would be transformed into one of beauty. Nature works fast in the northland. After an absence of a little over a fortnight I returned to find all marks of

snow and ice covered by Spring's new green coat, trimmed with trillium and myriads of the milky blooms of the wild cherry. The grand panorama was on, and I was there to share in the joy of being. Glorious are these days that usher in the sunshine, equaled only by those that close the painted gates of the forest in late October. Tracks there are, tracks, tracks everywhere. Tracks of the fisherman hastening to the stream for the first basket of trout, tracks to the boat house for the annual overhauling of the craft, tracks to the garden where the early seeds were being placed in the pockets of the warming earth, axe-made tracks of the woodsmen, tracks of the sugar makers, tracks of the farmers freed from their six months' imprisonment. Now soon will come the tracks of toil to wring from the soil during the all too few weeks of summer the sustenance for the long winter that never fails to arrive on time. And last the brilliant tracks of the early frost in the forests of maple and beech and birch and cherry, where scarlet and crimson and yellow vie with each other for mastery. Back of it all, and through it all the constant green of the silent pines and cedars adds to the loveliness of the scene.

I am sorry for those who think of Northern

Michigan only as a place of refuge in dog days, for it is in October that she dons her choicest garments, assumes her most charming manners, surrounds one with real comforts, and proves herself quite irresistible. Those who have never been in this region in autumn have missed a great joy. Very close to heaven lies this enticing land.

ANSWER TO A LITTLE GIRL'S LETTER

March 15, 1915

DEAR LILLY BELL:

It was sweet of you to write me a letter on your seventh birthday and tell me of the fine fun you are having at Elfwood Hollow and Fairy Cliff, away out in Iowa.

I too am interested in fairies. What do you think? Only yesterday while strolling through the park I overheard a bluebird and a robin talking secrets. "Yes," said the bluebird, "I am just in from the Southland. I saw the queen myself. She promised me a patch of violets to match my new spring coat." "That's nothing," said the robin, "she told me that we might have a whole orchard full of blossoms – apple and pear and peach and cherry – all for Mrs. Robin and me."

And then I found they were talking about the real Queen of the fairies, who rides in a chariot of clouds drawn by swift steeds of gray. Her shimmery garments are made of sunrise, and in her car are millions of flowers of every hue.

She carries a golden wand, and whatever of earth she touches springs into life. The colts kick, the lambs leap, and the squirrels frisk in glee. The Queen of the fairies is so full of joy that even her tears are tears of joy, and when they fall on field and wood and garden, gray turns to green, and gay-colored flowers lift their heads and gaze upon the good Fairy Queen.

The birds said the Queen would stop in Chicago a few weeks on her way to Eskimo Land. The birds are planning to give grand concerts for her every morning in the park, and the trees are to have a contest as to which shall have the most beautiful dress. They say she cannot stay very long because every night she hears the little Eskimos calling and calling and calling for her! Every morning I shall get up and look for her, for the robin and the bluebird know what they were talking about. It may be some weeks before she can get away from her friends in Alabama and Tennessee. I am planning on going with her as far as the Straits of Mackinac. I shall let you know when I shall have seen her.

Yours affectionately,

UNCLE OJ

THE PONY TALKS

Rotter Stables
Burt Lake, Michigan
December 20, 1925

Master Dick Ferguson
Chicago, Illinois

DEAR DICK:

Doubtless you will be surprised to get a letter from me. The funniest thing happened to me the other night that you ever heard of. I had swallowed a large piece of carrot without sufficiently chewing it, and had a pain in my stomach and couldn't go to sleep. As I lay in my stall in Mr. Rotter's barn, I fell to thinking about you all and wished you were with me. All of a sudden I heard the sweetest little voice calling, "Major! Major! Major!" First I thought I was dreaming, but all at once my stall became as light as day and at my side there stood a little fellow almost as handsome as Jim but, oh, not anywhere near so large. From his breast there shone a brilliant flashlight that fairly dazzled my eyes. I could see that this elf, or fairy, or whatever he was, had on

white riding boots with gold stripes on them, and gold spurs. The epaulets of his white and gold coat had fringes of horse hair, and on the flat part was a picture of our cart with Ruth driving, surrounded by all the boys. On his head was a saucy little cap made of red and white horse hair woven into cloth. In his hand was a riding whip of gold. This he proceeded to wave over my head, and pretty soon my mouth and throat began to feel very queer, and I became greatly alarmed. I thought that if I whinnied loudly maybe Mr. Rotter would hear me and would come to the barn, so I took a long breath and tried to cry out at the top of my voice. What do you think happened?

Instead of a whinney I said, "Hello!" – just like that! Then he laughed heartily and patted me, and said, "That's good. Now I am going to tell you a secret. I am a messenger from Equina, the place where all good ponies go when they die. You have been such a very good pony, and Dick, and Bill, and Jim, and William, and Ruth all love you so much that I come to do you a great service. I have known all the time how you listened to the children and longed to talk with them. I was up in the big hemlock tree the day you became so lonesome for the boys and searched for

them, and finally found them away back in the woods at the treehouse. And I was sitting on the fence the time you stumbled and skinned your nose and Billy went tumbling into the ditch. When he did not get up, I saw you come back and smell around him to see whether he was hurt. I was near by, although you could not see me, many other times when you were good and kind to the children, and especially to little Jim. You pleased me so much that I went to the King of Equina and asked him to let me come and teach you to talk. He studied a long while and then said to me, "It would never do to have ponies talking all the time for they soon wouldn't be worth anything as ponies. Probably Major would proceed to learn bridge and spend his time with Aunt Tot, and Aunt Ann, and Aunt Nettie, talking his head off instead of playing with the children! This is my decree:

Major may talk, but for one day only, and it must be tomorrow. Tomorrow he may talk from sunrise until sunset, but no longer.

"So here I am to bestow on you the gift of speech. It is now past midnight. You may now lie down and go to sleep, and just before daylight I will return, wave my golden whip over your

head, and then you can talk all you wish until sunset."

Well, I was so excited that I could not lie down, much less go to sleep. I even forgot that miserable old carrot in my stomach. I just stood with eyes wide open and waited and waited and waited, and thought out what all I would say to you. At last, just as day was breaking, I heard a clatter of the spurs on the roof. It opened – and the elf dropped right into my stall. He began to stroke my nose, pat my cheeks, and wave his whip, and again my tongue and throat felt queer and I knew I was about to talk.

Just then Mr. Rotter began to unlock the barn door and, quick as a flash, straight up through the roof the little fellow flew, and didn't leave even a hole behind him. Pretty soon Mr. Rotter put some alfalfa in my rack and I said, "Hello, Mr. Rotter! Don't I get any oats this morning?" Well, he was awfully frightened. He stared at me a moment, then dropped his fork and started to run to the house. At the doorway of the stable he fell over a bucket of water there, and skinned his shins, and got all wet. He yelled so loudly that Fred heard him and rushed out and took him into the house. Then the old man told them that *Major had spoken to him*! They at once sent for

Frank Rotter, for they thought the old man had gone crazy. Pretty soon the son Frank arrived and they all came out to the stable. Frank walked up to my stall quite bravelike, looked in my eye and said, "So you have been talking to my dad, have you?" "Yes," I responded promptly, "and now I am going to talk to you." Well, that scared him a little, too, or at least surprised him, for he did say a lot of strange words that I didn't understand because I never had heard you kids say them. I guess they must have been swear words. Finally he looked into my eyes kind of hard like, as if he thought I might jump out of the stall and bite him, and then he said, "All right, old boy, let her go."

Then I told him I wanted to talk to Dick and to William and to bring them to me. He said, "The boys all left here a long time ago, and will not be back until summer." "*Oh dear*!" I said, I have so much to say, and I am permitted to talk only until sunset." Well, I have heard Mr. Ferguson say that you can always count on Frank Rotter when in a pinch. He thought a minute and then turned to Fred and said, "Call up Frank Wyrick and tell him what has happened. Tell him to get his breakfast right away and take me to Petoskey and get a portable typewriter and a

stenographer. We will bring her right here to the stall, and she will take down and typewrite all that you want to say to the kids, and then we will send it to them by mail." So the two Franks brought the stenographer, and she wrote for me all I have told you so far, and all I shall tell you in this letter.

Oh, yes, I almost forget something funny. After I began to talk to Frank, Pa Rotter turned to Fred and said, "The next time I tell you that a hoss has talked to me you will believe me, won't you? You fellers hain't half so smart as you think."

Well, I talked to Mr. Rotter and Fred all the time the men were gone to Petoskey. I told them all I could remember about my early life, how I indistinctly remembered that my mother had traveled with a circus, and how the man had tried to teach me some of the little tricks I can do. I told Mr. Rotter how I happened to be at Burt Lake. I told him that the Chicago *Tribune* had offered a prize to the little boy or girl that would write the best letter to Chester Gump when he was in Australia, and that the *Tribune* man bought me from a man in Illinois who raises ponies to sell, and gave me to Dick because Dick

had written the best letter of all and chose a pony for a prize.

I was pretty nervous that day when the *Tribune* man led me up onto Ferguson's porch, but the minute I set my eyes on Dick I said, "He is all right. I know he will be kind to me and we will have good times together." I was very glad to get away from that dark, smoky old Chicago and come where there is grass, and trees, and flowers, and good water. I surely liked that house you built for me at the edge of the woods.

Mr. Rotter is very kind to me and I am perfectly comfortable, but I do get so lonesome these long, cold days. I do not like the deep snow and the dark nights. How I wish you were here with your chatter and pats and kisses. I can hardly wait until summer. Please hurry back!

Oh dear! It will soon be sunset and my furlough ended. Thence once more I must do all my talking with my eyes and heels. You remember when I bucked, and the time I kicked the dashboard off? Well, I was just using pony language to tell you that there was something wrong. I sometimes wonder what would happen if ponies could talk all the time and boys couldn't talk at all. I guess if some one rode you on a hot day so

long and so hard that you could scarcely breathe, or if you were overloaded, or had sore feet, or if your clothes chafed you, or if you had to pull a big load around when you had the stomach ache and couldn't speak a single word, you probably would do some bucking and kicking yourself.

The stenographer says that she must go, so I will close, wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Think of me often, and remember that I will be waiting to welcome you when the south wind brings you back to Burt Lake along with the birds and the leaves and the flowers and the grass and all that I love.

Until then, good-bye.

Lovingly yours,

MAJOR

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